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## EVENTS OF THE WEEK

**A**FTER three or four days, during which every bulletin increased the anxiety as to the development of the King's illness, the news of a successful operation, while it by no means removes that anxiety, affords reasonable grounds on which to base hopes of future improvement. By a happy chance, better news coincided not only with the Prince's return, but with the unveiling by the Queen of the memorial to men of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets who lost their lives in the Great War—Her Majesty's first public engagement for nearly three weeks. The obligation of carrying out these acts of public ceremonial in times of private grief or anxiety is among the heavier burdens of Royalty, and a sense of sympathetic relief at the morning's more favourable bulletin was very perceptible in the crowd which attended the simple, but singularly impressive ceremony on Tower Hill.

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A dispute as to the boundary between Bolivia and Paraguay has led to a clash between Bolivian and Paraguayan troops, in which both sides suffered casualties. Paraguay has offered arbitration; Bolivia has refused it, and the Bolivian mob is shouting for war in the best à Berlin style. Nevertheless, it is likely that the dispute will be composed; for a war would be highly inconvenient to the world in general. Bolivia has reported the affair to the League of Nations; but the League is unlikely to grasp so irritant a nettle as the Monroe Doctrine, and will hesitate to go beyond the urgent recommendations of a pacific settlement already dispatched by the Council. The United States, with the Kellogg Pact before the Senate, and the Pan-

American Congress sitting at Washington to discuss universal arbitration, will have every incentive, including the desire to leave no ground for League action, to promote a speedy settlement. The other South American Republics, who have every reason for avoiding a choice between the Monroe Doctrine and the League, and a strong desire to show that they can manage their own affairs without United States interference, will certainly throw their whole influence on the side of peace. Chile and Argentina have already offered mediation. Whatever its issue, the incident should suggest the desirability of some co-operation, however informal, between the Pan-American Congress and the League, and may reinforce President Coolidge's desire for United States adherence to the International Court.

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Mr. Neville Chamberlain has done what he was expected to do in announcing a reduction of the housing subsidy, which is to apply to all houses which are completed after next September. The subsidy given under the 1923 Act to houses built by private individuals is to be abolished altogether; and the subsidy for houses erected under official housing schemes is to be reduced by £1 10s. per annum. The latter change is the controversial one. The cut is less severe than had been rumoured beforehand. None the less, it is substantial, representing (under the arrangement by which the local authorities add 50 per cent. to the subsidy from the rates) approximately 1s. per week on the rent of the house. To reduce the housing subsidy at all just now is, in our view, a thoroughly reactionary step. The argument by which Mr. Chamberlain has made it clear that he will justify

his action, namely, that it will lead to a lowering of building costs is, we believe, quite baseless. There is only one channel through which the cut in the subsidy can possibly exert any such influence—namely, by reducing the volume of building, which is the last thing we ought to aim at, with unemployment at its present level. But at the present time there is virtually no scope for reduction, even through this channel. As Mr. E. D. Simon pointed out in a letter to the *TIMES* last week, the prices charged both by contractors and by the suppliers of building materials have for some time past been cut extremely fine; and it is hard to see how they can be further reduced otherwise than by cuts in wages. The true *desideratum* at the present time is a steady housing programme; and this is bound to be prejudiced by Mr. Chamberlain's decision.

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The Street Offences Committee, which was appointed in October, 1927, has been somewhat overshadowed by the Savidge Inquiry and the Royal Commission on the Police, but it has been investigating questions of considerable public importance, and its Report, which has now been issued (Cmd. 3231) deserves attention. The Committee, which was under the Chairmanship of Mr. Hugh Macmillan, and included Sir Chartres Biron, Miss Margery Fry, Mr. W. A. Jowitt, and Lady Joynson-Hicks among its members, was able to make a unanimous report, with certain reservations. The main recommendations are that the existing general and local legislation relating to solicitation should be repealed; that there should be substituted a simple enactment of general application constituting it an offence for any person of either sex to importune a person of the opposite sex for immoral purposes in any street or public place; that "importune" should be defined as referring to molestation by offensive words or behaviour; and that it should be made an offence for any person to frequent any street or public place for the purpose of prostitution or solicitation so as to constitute a nuisance, but that the evidence of one or more of the persons aggrieved by this should be essential to a conviction.

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It will be seen that the effect of the Committee's recommendations would be to simplify and clarify the law, rather than to change it. The proposals will not satisfy those who think that the law relating to solicitation gives the police too much opportunity and temptation to blackmail women of bad reputation. It is difficult to understand the grounds for a distinction drawn by the Committee between the evidence which should be required to secure a conviction for "importuning" on the one hand, and "frequenting . . . so as to constitute a nuisance" on the other. With respect to the former offence, the Report says that:—

"To enact that there should be no conviction unless the person alleged to have been annoyed gives evidence and proves personal annoyance would be to enact a dead letter, for we have to recognize it as an irrefutable fact that in general persons accosted will not attend the court and give evidence, no doubt for the reason that they do not wish to be mixed up in such unpleasant cases."

This is not an altogether convincing statement. An "irrefutable fact" can only be established by experience, and the evidence upon which the Committee relies is presumably based upon the behaviour of people under the existing law, which accepts police evidence as sufficient. In any case, the Committee itself expects members of the general public to give evidence of the similar offence of "frequenting."

It is obvious, of course, that the number of convictions under either head would be diminished if the evidence of "aggrieved persons" were required. It is matter for speculation whether enough public-spirited or litigious people would come forward to preserve public decency. Whether the risk is deemed worth running will depend upon the importance attributed to the dangers of relying upon police evidence. Of these, much the greatest is, in our judgment, that of blackmail. In that connection, the Committee observes:—

"We have in the course of evidence heard suggestions of bribery of the police by prostitutes either with money or with other favours. We believe that instances of this must inevitably occur. . . . This risk is not confined to the case of prostitutes. . . . What we are concerned with is the question whether the present law dealing with solicitation offences gives rise to exceptional and avoidable occasion for bribery. We are not able to suggest any means whereby this risk can be lessened by a change in the legislation. So long as street offences are amenable to the law in any form they will offer opportunities for bribery."

It is clear, however, that the risk would be greatly reduced if uncorroborated police-evidence was insufficient to secure a conviction.

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The 53rd session of the League of Nations Council opened on Monday at Lugano, where those recent invalids Herr Stresemann and Sir Austen Chamberlain hoped to find milder weather than could be expected this month in Geneva. The witticism quoted by the *TIMES* Correspondent, "The Council touches nothing that it does not adjourn," aptly sums up the work done in public session so far. A report from the Mandates Commission has been adjourned—quite rightly, as the relevant documents are not yet ready. The Hungarian dispute with Roumania was adjourned, in view of direct negotiations pending between the parties. The question whether the Council can seek an advisory opinion from the International Court by a simple majority was adjourned, apparently because the Council could not agree on it. And Sir Austen's proposal to reduce the number of Council meetings was also adjourned, because that is a matter upon which the Assembly has a right to speak. Meanwhile, vital matters respecting Reparations and the Rhineland are supposed to be under discussion outside the Council Chamber, and the dispute between Paraguay and Bolivia has been the subject of two secret sessions.

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Whenever Signor Mussolini speaks in public he has to overcome the difficulties inherent in the position of a man who is for ever preaching to the converted. Emphatic repetition, though useful, is not entirely suitable for great occasions like the closing of the Legislature, when the extravagance of the last speech must be exceeded by some new and more resonant absurdity. Signor Mussolini is, of course, a great master of flouts and jibes; but hitherto he has not made targets of the Ministers of foreign Powers, with whom his Government is on friendly terms. His references to the Kellogg Pact—he declares it to be so sublime as to be transcendental—introduce a new manner which will presumably be further developed when the 100 per cent. Fascist Parliament assembles and applauds his declamations. The most offensive passages of his valedictory speech may be described in the Fascist Press as expressions of high courage. Those against whom they are directed will certainly take no notice; but there is another section of the speech which brings the Duce and his whole system on to dangerous ground.

Signor Mussolini has stated that he intends to demand from the nation another effort to put the land, sea, and air forces on a proper footing. Millions of Italians will take this to be an intimation that they will pay more taxes; and this is the question upon which all the discontent in the country is focused. It is, in many respects, surprising how little the theoretic and constitutional issues of the Fascist regime interest even well-educated Italians. But every section of society, particularly the peasant proprietors, grumbles at over-taxation. The Fascist Government, which has become more and more Roman and less Italian in sentiment, never seems to have grasped that the sources of its popularity are changing with changing circumstances, and that it is being tried before a very numerous, but inarticulate tribunal upon this wholly practical issue. Active and dangerous discontent may still be a distant contingency; but every successive refusal to consider the question of taxation brings it nearer; even a fear of additional burdens will certainly give it a considerable impulse.

\* \* \*

A great sensation has been created in Belgium by the result of a by-election in Antwerp. A by-election for the Belgian Chamber is a rare occurrence, for a substitute is elected for each Member at the General Election. It so happened, however, that a Liberal Member for Antwerp died recently, and, his substitute not being available, a by-election took place. Election is by proportional representation in Belgium, and custom suggested that the nominee of the Liberal Party (which is a party of the Right) should be unopposed. The Communists, however, with their usual disregard of conventions, put forward a candidate, and the Activists thereupon nominated Dr. Borms, who is still languishing in prison. The leaders of the two largest parties in Antwerp the Socialists and the Catholics, mildly advised their followers to abstain from voting. The result was a severe shock to the Walloons. Dr. Borms polled 83,000 votes, the Liberal polled 44,000, the Communist 5,000, and there were 58,000 "white papers," or abstentions. (It should be explained that voting is compulsory in Belgium.) Meanwhile, the Amnesty Bill has passed through the Chamber, and seems certain to become law, but it has been so amended that, although Dr. Borms will be released, he will not regain his civic rights or be permitted to take his seat in the Chamber.

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The internal situation in Yugoslavia has become perceptibly more dangerous as the result of incidents which occurred at Zagreb on the tenth anniversary of union between Serbia and the old Slav provinces of the Austrian Empire. The Croats are not in the mood, at present, to rejoice publicly or privately over their incorporation in the Triune Kingdom. Unfortunately, they were not content with abstaining from participation in the ceremonies; black flags were hung from the Cathedral; the troops were insulted; shots were fired on both sides, and several people were killed or wounded. The result has been both to fan the flame of Croat indignation against Belgrade, and to harden the temper of the Serbs. A new military Governor was appointed to Zagreb. The Zagreb County Council has resolved to boycott him. Father Koroshetz, the Yugoslavia Premier, replied by an emergency law, empowering the Minister of the Interior to dissolve any County Council at the request of the local Governor, and the Zagreb Council has been dissolved accordingly. Handled on these lines, the position must steadily deteriorate. It looks as if nothing but the intervention of the King, to force a dissolution and the election of a new Skupshtina, pledged to constitutional reforms,

could avert a very grave crisis. The present attitude of the Serbs—love us or take the consequences—is not practical politics.

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The British and Japanese Governments, having agreed to exchange views about Chinese affairs, have been promptly presented with something to discuss. On December 5th, the Nanking Government promulgated a new Chinese tariff, to come into effect on February 1st. The schedule of duties is understood to correspond closely to that drawn up by the Peking Conference. The significance of this step lies in the fact that the Peking Conference was dissolved before the signature of any general treaty acknowledging China's tariff autonomy. The United States and some other Powers have formally acknowledged China's rights in this respect by new commercial treaties; but the old treaties with Great Britain, France, and Japan are still in force. Count Yada, the Japanese Consul-General, has protested against the promulgation of the new tariff while negotiations are still pending between Tokyo and Nanking. Sir Miles Lampson, the British Minister, has at once opened negotiations on the tariff issue with the Chinese Government.

\* \* \*

The reports from India leave no doubt that a large number of Afghan tribes are in revolt against the Amir's Government. The mullah of Chaknaur, it would seem, is at the head of a loose confederation of tribes who inhabit the mountains to the north-east of Jalalabad. He has brought his armies to the walls of Jalalabad, which was at one time reported to have surrendered. Nothing is known as yet of the counter measures taken by the central Government. There can be little doubt that the Amir's regular forces are powerful enough to deal with the revolt, for the Afghan army is well equipped and organized, but it is by no means certain, up to date, whether the causes of the disaffection are not of a kind which might affect the discipline of the regular army. If the revolt has started from one of the ordinary variants of Afghan politics, the regular troops will probably be faithful to their paymasters. If the tribes have risen in protest against the Amir's European novelties at the Court, it is another matter. Many shrewd observers have thought that the Amir has treated the traditional prejudices of his countrymen far too lightly.

\* \* \*

The decision, to which we referred last week, of the executives of the trade unions in the textile industry to support an application by employers in the trade for safeguarding, has led to an immediate expression of opposition from sections of the workers. The important Bradford branch of the Amalgamated Society of Dyers has passed a resolution protesting against the decision, and requesting the Amalgamated Society of Dyers to withdraw its two executive members from the trade unions' sub-committee which is co-operating with the employers in the examination of proposals for safeguarding. Feeling on the question runs high, and the adoption of the Bradford branch's recommendation by the Amalgamated Society of Dyers would involve the withdrawal of the latter body from the national association of trade unions in the textile industry. While it is not thought that this extreme step will be taken, considerable dissatisfaction is expressed that the voting of the workers' representatives at the meeting which decided on the issue of safeguarding was taken by executives and not in proportion to the membership represented, with the result that the majority vote in favour of safeguarding really represented a minority of workers in the associated unions.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RHINELAND

THE answer which Sir Austen Chamberlain gave last week to a Parliamentary question regarding the occupation of the Rhineland has aroused widespread criticism in the British, as well as the German, Press. We do not, for our part, consider that this particular answer deserved the hard things that have been said of it. The question put to Sir Austen related to the legal position; it invited him to interpret the Treaty of Versailles. It was clearly not an "arranged" question; it came from the Labour benches. We do not see, therefore, how Sir Austen can fairly be blamed for having answered it; and the opinion which he gave on the legal point seems to us, as to many of his critics, incontestable. Nor does it seem just to accuse him of having adopted a narrowly legalistic standpoint, in view of the distinction which he expressly and repeatedly made between the question of law and the question of policy. But whether this particular answer is, in itself, open to serious objection is a small matter. What is much more important is Sir Austen's attitude upon the Rhineland question, and the way in which he is using the influence of Great Britain in the obscure negotiations which are doubtless now being continued at Lugano. Behind the protests which his answer of last week evoked, there lies the belief that Sir Austen's attitude upon this vital issue is by no means what it should be. That belief is, we fear, only too well founded.

Germany may not have—we do not believe she has—a strictly legal right to demand the immediate evacuation of the Rhineland. But, morally, her claim is overwhelming. It is no mere question of its being desirable, as a spontaneous act of magnanimity and wisdom, for the Allies to leave the Rhineland before the date laid down in the Treaty of Versailles. They are morally bound to do so. Undertakings have been given to Germany, since the Treaty of Versailles was framed, which can only be honourably fulfilled by prompt and unconditional evacuation. As early as June, 1919, we have the formal assurance of President Wilson, M. Clemenceau, and Mr. Lloyd George that the occupation would be terminated when Germany had given proofs of good-will and guarantees that she would fulfil her obligations. Germany has already given the sort of proofs and guarantees which this declaration contemplated, under Locarno (as regards the territorial settlement) and under the Dawes Plan (as regards Reparations). Again, it was part of the understanding of Locarno, reinforced by the Thoisy conversations, that the evacuation of the Rhineland would shortly follow. When we remember that the whole idea of Locarno was that of a definite reconciliation between the belligerents in the late war, and that there is no precedent in international relations for occupying the territory of even an unreconciled enemy for so long a space as fifteen years, we say that to prolong the occupation of the Rhineland now, as a bargaining counter in the new Reparations discussions, or for any similar

reason, will be an outrage against international decency.

Yet this undoubtedly is the policy of France—to hang on in the Rhineland as long as she possibly can, and to exact some material *quid pro quo* as a condition of evacuating it. It is a policy which is utterly repugnant to British public opinion. Here, indeed, we have the chief explanation of that phenomenon, which Sir Frederick Maurice deplored in a speech last week, the growth of anti-French feeling in this country. It is all very well to argue that French policy since the Armistice is to be explained by a profound fear of a renascent Germany, to point out how natural such fears are in the light of Franco-German history, and to urge that they can only be dissipated very gradually. We are most of us willing to make a large allowance for these considerations. Undoubtedly it is much easier for us than it can be for the French to appreciate the wisdom of a really liberal policy towards Germany. In the matter of armaments, for instance, we recognize, for our part, that it is idle to expect France, at this stage of the world's history, to make such reductions in her military strength as would put her capacity to defeat Germany in war in any doubt.

But there are many features of French policy which the fear complex does not explain; and prominent among them is the reluctance to evacuate the Rhineland. The motive here has nothing to do with security; it is financial. The Agent-General for Reparations, Mr. Parker Gilbert, has for some time past been urging behind the scenes the desirability of replacing the Dawes Plan by a new Reparations settlement; and his pertinacity has at last succeeded in inducing the interested Governments to make the attempt. The problem bristles with difficulties; the chances of an early solution, as we have previously argued, are not good. Yet it is on the solution of this problem that France insists that the evacuation of the Rhineland must depend. She proposes, in other words, to use the legal rights which the Treaty of Versailles gives her in regard to the Rhineland as a bargaining counter in the financial negotiations. So much is unconcealed. What is not so openly avowed is that it is hoped that the Rhineland will prove a useful card, not only against Germany, but against the United States. The hope is still entertained that America may be induced to abate her claims in respect of inter-Allied debts; and the calculation is that the best means of inducing her to do so is to touch her conscience by making it appear that, so long as she declines to do so, she is obstructing, not only a settlement of Reparations, but the evacuation of the Rhineland, and is thus endangering the whole cause of the political appeasement of Europe.

These calculations are, in our judgment, as foolish as they are dangerous. They belong to that category of silly-clever calculations which have been responsible for some of the grossest blunders of history. Yet such are undoubtedly the considerations which explain the present policy of France regarding the evacuation of the Rhineland. So far from being prompted by a natural, if excessive, preoccupation with security, this policy is



frivolously reckless of security. The instinctive feeling of the British people that it constitutes the chief remaining peril to European peace is, we believe, entirely sound.

We have only to ask ourselves how Germany might once again become a real menace to France in order to realize the supreme importance of the Rhineland question. It would be necessary for Germany, after first cultivating such close relations with Italy, or some other Power, as would make France hesitate to attack her, to repudiate or to evade the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. She would have to reintroduce conscription, in effect, if not in name. Such a policy would not only place Germany in the wrong before world public opinion; it would be extremely unpopular in Germany itself, failing a genuine and widespread feeling of national grievance. This feeling could not possibly be created by mere nationalist sentiment or ambition, nor even, we believe, by resentment against the territorial arrangements of the Treaty of Versailles. Only the continued occupation of the Rhineland could stimulate bitterness to the intense degree that would be necessary to induce the German people, in face of the Covenant and the Pact of Paris, to set out on the arduous and hazardous policy of *revanche*. Only the continued occupation of the Rhineland could do it, but this easily might.

## GLADSTONE

**L**ORD GLADSTONE'S book\* on his father is not merely a pious tribute marked by good taste and judgment; it is a contribution to history from a first-hand authority. We learn from these pages that the dignity and patience with which Gladstone bore the Queen's displeasure governed his private behaviour as it governed his public conduct. The book has been inspired or provoked by the last volume of the Queen's letters. Those volumes were remarkable for their omissions, for the exciting episodes of the autumn of 1885, when Lord Salisbury and his colleagues considered and rejected the policy of constructive reform in Ireland never came to the surface. That silence is a mystery. Was the Queen kept in complete ignorance of these events? Did she destroy all papers relating to them? The omission was the more striking because the editor published two letters from Queen Victoria to Lord and Lady Wolseley which she asked her recipients to destroy; the letters created a painful impression, for they showed how far her sense of duty and good faith could go astray when her temper overcame her judgment. An editor who decided that those letters ought to be published with all their consequences to her reputation, was hardly likely to withhold any document for reasons of State. Lord Gladstone is therefore justified in calling attention to this remarkable gap in the correspondence. That silence, as Lord Gladstone says, leaves an impression that is unjust to Lord Salisbury. For Lord Salisbury appointed Carnarvon Viceroy with full knowledge of Carnarvon's sympathies. If no concessions were ever under consideration his conduct could only be explained as an electioneering trick, and a trick that succeeded, for the Irish vote went Con-

servative a few weeks later. But when all the facts revealed in Sir Arthur Hardinge's *Life of Carnarvon* are reviewed it is perfectly clear that Lord Salisbury had not closed his mind on this subject, and that like some of his most important colleagues he was seriously considering attempts to meet the Irish demand, in accordance with the wishes of the Viceroy and the Chief Secretary and some of the wisest men in Dublin Castle. Knowing this, Gladstone made, in December, 1885, the overtures through Lord Balfour of which we have in this volume the full details published for the first time.

Lord Gladstone's book is a defence of his father; a defence in which blunders are freely admitted, while the circumstances that led to them are explained. These blunders have had resounding echoes in history. Yet when the worst has been made of the blunders in South Africa and the Soudan, are they in themselves worse than the blunders made by other Governments? Consider the blunders made by Pitt and Dundas in the French war; the blunders of the Crimean war; the blunders of Disraeli's Government; the blunders that marked the first stages of the South African war in 1899. Is it not true that British Governments have more often than not made a mess of all overseas operations? And is not the explanation simple? In such circumstances statesmen are largely at the mercy of experts; experts are often wrong, and they generally differ. One may agree in a general way with Lord Salisbury's famous dictum that the best thing about the War Office is that it is always inefficient, and yet recognize that there are times when inefficiency has its disadvantages. A Cabinet is a Committee, and a Committee, the best body for some of the tasks of Government, is the worst when experts wrangle with experts or when the expert advises one thing and common sense recommends another. A man of decision may choose his advisers and act quickly, but Cabinet life encourages more dilatory methods. The Cabinet of 1880 had no men of decision in the critical offices; if Chamberlain had been at the Colonial Office in 1881, or at the War Office in 1884, history might have been different. The composition of Gladstone's Cabinet showed that he was not always a good judge between the forces of the past and the forces of the future. But if he had proposed to put Chamberlain where he put Kimberley and Hartington, the Queen would have taken leave of her senses.

The Government at that time was exposed to a vindictive criticism which obscured the truth that it was trying to pick its way between two dangers; the danger to Gordon and the danger to peace. If you wanted war, the problem was simple; it was less simple if you feared to involve England in a war in the Soudan against people whose revolt from Egypt had been justified by Gordon himself. For this high party temperature Gladstone was in one sense responsible. He had conceived his campaign on the Balkan question as a religious duty, and it was in that spirit that he had used his incomparable power and flung the thunder of his indignation. But one consequence, a consequence that the Queen foresaw, was the fierce retaliation of the eighties. The leader of the Opposition, Sir Stafford Northcote, was free from this spirit, but the most active members of his party remembered what they had suffered in the storm, and were in no mood to think of anything less immediate than revenge. When the catastrophe came it brought retribution greater than had fallen on Governments whose blunders had been greater because of the spell cast by "the man of England circled by the sands," and the agony of suspense that ended in his lonely death. The world watching the shadows closing over the head of a brave man, half condottiere half saint, half

\* "After Thirty Years." By Viscount Gladstone. (Macmillan. 21s.)

soldier half mystic, while Ministers hesitate and experts argue, is moved as the loss of an army would not have moved it.

Lord Gladstone's book describes more vividly than any other the extraordinary state of politics in the autumn of 1885. The Conservative Government had sent a second Fitzwilliam to Ireland; Randolph Churchill had led a Tory attack on Spencer's administration of the law; Parnell had thrown in his lot with the Conservatives. The Liberal Party was a chaos. The Whigs dreaded the Radicals, and the Radicals hated the Whigs; the slow mind of Hartington was guided by fear of Chamberlain as a symbol of a twentieth-century revolution; the quick mind of Chamberlain was goaded by dislike of Hartington as a symbol of the eighteenth-century selfishness of class; the Chief Whip was a cipher with the outlook of a Conservative; Gladstone himself was not so much the leader of a party as a solemn and solitary figure with one thing, and one thing only, in his meditations, that long quarrel which had thrown its shadow across the youth of his master Peel and had darkened his own old age with public and private sorrow. So little did he think of himself as a party leader that he made a momentous proposal to the Prime Minister without a word to his colleagues. In the midst of this confusion, as we learn from these pages, Lord Gladstone put himself in the train for London, met a few leading journalists, talked as he hoped discreetly to them, with the result that a new element was added to the confusion when the Press announced that Gladstone had decided for Home Rule. Lord Gladstone tells us that he acted entirely of his own accord, fearing that the party might be led away from ignorance and commit itself against Home Rule. It was a young man and not an old man in a hurry who with these excellent intentions added this new difficulty to a dangerous problem.

Lord Gladstone admits that his father made a mistake in his treatment of Chamberlain. Chamberlain was passionately in earnest about social reform; he was, after Gladstone, almost the most powerful man in England on the platform; he was straight, direct, and charming in personal relations; he had great gifts as an administrator. His distraction from the great tasks he had in mind has been a calamity to England from that day to this. He had one weakness, his temper. It was his temper that ruined the round-table conference; it was his temper that ruined his promising prospects of settling South Africa without war in 1899. It may be that Gladstone thought it dangerous to send him to Ireland in 1882; a statesman in judgment, but as a man liable to be betrayed into passion by an exasperating problem and an exasperating people. In 1886, again, he may have thought that he had to choose between two ambitious and sensitive men, Chamberlain and Morley. Or he may have divined already the lurking passion for Empire which was ultimately to get the better of Chamberlain's radicalism. Whatever his reasoning, the course he took in accepting Chamberlain as a colleague and giving him unimportant office seems indefensible. He might have said, as Maurice of Saxony said of Charles V., "I have no cage big enough for such a bird." What he seems to have said is, "This is an uncommonly big bird, it is prudent, therefore, to put him in one of the smaller cages."

Lord Gladstone thinks that if Lord Salisbury had received Gladstone's offer before his Government had made its decision between reform and coercion, he would have made a different choice. But we know from Sir Arthur Hardinge's *Life of Carnarvon* what was the obstacle in Lord Salisbury's mind. What was good for Ireland, and what was practicable for the Tory Party, he said, were different things; he would not play the part of Peel. To

understand his case, we must remember that he resisted the Franchise Bill of 1887, and that he had disliked and dreaded the power Disraeli had won over the Conservative Party. His attitude to public life was that of a man who says, "You have created this medium for me to work in; I think it is a bad medium, but I can only obey the conditions thrust upon me. I will not, like Peel, impose my will upon the party if it means disruption, opening a door as Peel opened it to new and dangerous personal influences." Had he been a Minister in a powerful aristocracy, or a Minister serving a sovereign who desired such an end, a Minister free to disregard public sentiment, not compelled to think what Randolph Churchill might make of his party, if once discipline and unity went, he and Gladstone perhaps might have settled the Irish question. The best minds of his party (his own among them) were attracted to reform, but Salisbury would have thought the destruction of the party to which he looked for the defence of Church and property too great a price to pay for Irish peace. And the risk of such destruction was increased by the temper of the Queen. The idea of governing Ireland by concession rasped her mind as the idea of Catholic emancipation rasped the mind of George III. On such a subject, as Gladstone said in a fine passage now printed, admiring her sincerity, she could not trust herself to speak. To what courses might she not be driven in resistance?

Gladstone is the extreme antithesis. There is something contemptuous in his treatment of his party. He acts and speaks like an independent power. Because Ireland fills his mind, his memory, his imagination, and his conscience, he makes men who want a hundred other things believe that nothing else in the world matters except making peace between Ireland and England. This is no sudden outburst; it is part of his character; like Peel his master, he belongs to two centuries. Dr. Temperley has said admirably, in his little book on the Victorian age, that as you watched Gladstone making up the accounts of the nation as neatly as a grocer, you see the spirit of the age moulding even greatness in its pattern. That is one Gladstone, but there is the other Gladstone; the Gladstone with Burke's ideas of leadership. It is this combination that gives him his special place in history. The ideal eighteenth-century statesman would have said of his own position that his place in a privileged class, with all its traditions and experience, entitled him to govern the nation, but that he owed in return the duty of governing with the best of his mind. The dramatic example of this spirit in Gladstone's career was, of course, his behaviour after Majuba. His reputation as a statesman would have gained if he had settled South Africa before Majuba; Lord Gladstone describes the series of blunders which caused the postponement and the mishandling of the Transvaal problem when the Gladstone Government came in. But as an act of superlative courage, as a display of will, the circumstances under which retrocession was made give it its heroic quality. Gladstone said in effect, "I will risk any misunderstanding rather than be guilty of bloodshed for the sake of prestige; I will answer to man for what looks like fear rather than answer to God for what I should know to be fear." When you throw your mind over the history of Europe from the day of Sedan, how hard it is to match that dramatic hour when an old man, speaking the language of the Sermon on the Mount, made a people of high mettle abjure the spirit of revenge.

During the melancholy weeks when the hopes of a wise peace were dribbling away in the winter of 1918, it was apparent to all observers that nothing but an act of courage and generosity comparable to that act could prevent a catastrophe. There was no one in Paris, from any country



in the world, capable of that act. This truth, painfully clear to those watching the negotiations at the time, is brought out vividly in House's book. One incident illustrates the situation. When the Germans complained of the peace Lloyd George said that the peace was too severe and would lead to disaster. "Very good," replied Clemenceau; "which of the colonies you have taken do you propose to give up, how much of your indemnity will you forgo?" Silence fell. Every statesman in Paris saw something wrong with the peace, but nobody was prepared to face his own countrymen and say that they would have to take less than they expected. "You and I know," said a French statesman to the writer, "that France can never recover from the war until France forgives Germany, but the French people are not ready yet to hear so harsh a truth." That Frenchman spoke for the peacemakers of every nation.

It is often said that the peace would have been much better if other statesmen had had a hand in its making; Bryce, Grey, Asquith, Lansdowne, or MacDonald. That may be true in small details, but it is not true of the character of the peace. That was determined by the power of the popular temper over the imagination and the fears of public men; a power that no man of the modern race could break. It is the fashion to contrast the vindictive peace of Versailles with the generous peace of Vienna. But Wellington and Castlereagh had not to face a popular audience to whose excited tastes the truth had to be tempered. The task of making peace at Versailles was less simple. If you try to think of a man who might have made a generous peace in 1919, a man, that is, with a religious view of his duty to Europe and a strong faith in his power to make a nation follow where he led, the only name that comes to the mind is that of Gladstone.

J. L. HAMMOND.

## THE NEEDS OF THE VILLAGE

### II.

A FRIEND of mine, who is Secretary of the Rural Community Council in a very rural but remarkably progressive county, tells me he thinks there is a danger of villages being over-worked by the throng of social activities that are thrust upon them. Because villages are small and Little Puddlecombe expects every man to do his duty in each of its social enterprises—indeed must have his interested service if the enterprises are to be successful—it is a mistake to expect every small place to have a choral society and a drama class and lectures and cookery lessons and weeknight services. Not only will these things kill one another if there are too many of them. They may kill something else—something which is intrinsically and peculiarly rural, but none the less valuable for that. They may leave no time, as my friend points out, for "leaning over the bridge and sucking straws—activities unfortunately not recognized by Women's Institutes, Rural Community Councils, and most individuals interested in reconstructing the countryside." I believe there is much truth in this criticism. Before the war things were different; but, to take one example, there are certainly districts to-day where the supply of village dances exceeds the demand and where in consequence the attendance is thin and a dance brings little joy to the few who are there and involves its promoters in a financial deficit. Apart from that, we do not want to see country life too bustling. "Sucking straws" is not a very noble pursuit, but it is better than having a rest cure for nerves after the fashion of the town. And along with the sucking of straws we may easily destroy

some of the best qualities of the old-time villager—his quiet humour, his reflectiveness, the slow sagacity of his judgment, and his "dumb loving of the Berkshire loam." I am sure that the "new villagers" who want to help the people among whom they have come to live need sometimes to be reminded of these things. It is so tempting, when one wants to see the life of the countryside richer and fuller, to start something new—village drama, let us say—without stopping to think whether there is really room for it, or whether its initiation will kill the struggling choral society that is already in existence. It is more pleasant, no doubt, but it is not always better, to start a show of one's own than to co-operate in making an existing enterprise successful. And that brings me to a more fundamental matter. English village society is in a stage of transition between autocracy and democracy. The wage-earners and small-holders of the village resent autocratic methods, but they are scarcely capable as yet of managing things democratically. They lack initiative; and they need leadership. "There ought to be a meeting," is a phrase frequently on the lips of rustics, who, when the meeting is summoned, fail to attend it, or show no constructive helpfulness if they do attend. Leadership is needed; but leadership of the right sort is hard to find. An authoritarian tradition still flavours the efforts of the squire or the parson, and that tends sometimes to put people's backs up, and at least does not help to develop initiative and responsibility among the cottagers themselves. The farmers too, accustomed to be looked on as "masters," do not readily acquire the skill to lead without domineering. In old days authoritarian methods were not resented—I remember an aged labourer chuckling with delighted recollections of the good old times, when, as he said, a farmer would come into the field and order his men to come out and play cricket. In these days the men would probably say they didn't want to play. It is, none the less, in village cricket that co-operation is usually most healthy and the differences between classes least evident—perhaps because the qualities which rank men in the game itself are easily recognizable by all and have no relation to the player's station in life!

The lack of leadership is a call to the "new villager" of good will. He, if any man, will know how to steer the middle course—to avoid, on the one hand, the doctrinaire democracy which will, too often, end in chaos and grumbling, and, on the other, the sterile and short-lived efficiency of benevolent despotism. His absences from his country cottage may be a positive advantage, for they may be a means of teaching the club or other social organization in which he has interested himself, the essential lesson of how to do without him. He can give a helping hand and prevent things getting into a hopeless muddle. He can guide, without "bossing the show." And thus, without too great a sacrifice in the efficiency of the enterprise, he can secure what is of greater and more permanent importance than its success—the development among the villagers of the power of managing things for themselves. When things begin to go wrong, he can show how easily they can be put to rights with a little good will and prudence, and he can save his neighbours from that sense of failure and helplessness which is the bane of village people by playing the part of a *marchand d'espérance*—to borrow a phrase of Napoleon's.

Two things especially the village needs. The one is people who are willing to help in enterprises which they do not dominate. A single individual can do much by setting an example of social service in a subordinate capacity. It is not an easy thing, for it means being tolerant of other people's ideals and may involve helping people to do things which one could do oneself more effec-



tively without them. It is no wonder that the country clergy seldom afford an example of this kind of service. In a village the parson is rather afraid to be associated with an enterprise unless he can determine its character, and he is accustomed to work single-handed. For example, in acting as "correspondent" for the village school, he does a lot of unpaid and very necessary work which people are very ready to leave on his shoulders without saying "Thank you," and which he feels would be muddled if he did not keep it in his own hands. But it is a pity: the education of the village in social service is sacrificed in the interests of immediate efficiency. After all, the tag *Aut Caesar, aut nullus* is not a quotation from the Ordination Service.

The second great need is the development of initiative among the labouring folk. The social enterprise which receives all its inspiration from above will not last long, and is usually not worth much while it lasts. And initiative is good in itself. Because the village labourer in his ordinary life directs so little and is directed so much—because he has so little margin for choice, whether in the spending of his time or the spending of his money—his powers of initiative become atrophied. All the more do they need to be cultivated, and given soil in which to grow. What a recent writer has called the "instinct of constructiveness" is a fundamental human impulse; if it is stifled, a man's whole nature is impaired. Something to mould, some means of expressing purposes that are his own and not imposed upon him—every man needs that.

And lying dormant, there is generally more capacity for initiative than we think. Some time ago, in a village which I have known intimately for more than thirty years, an additional bell was put in the church tower. Though fond of ringing myself, I confess that I thought it a waste of money. It had often been difficult to get enough ringers to ring the five bells: how would it be with six? But I was wrong. The number of ringers increased: a spirit of genuine enthusiasm was generated; and it has lasted. A young workman, who had hitherto lived a rather shy and self-centred life, took the lead of himself, and under him the little band mastered the intricacies of "method ringing," hitherto unknown to the village. He has found a purpose in life outside his immediate self, and they have all found pleasure in an activity which has more pure intellectuality about it than anything else they have known. It does not do to be too pessimistic, even when you have known a place some thirty years.

REGINALD LENNARD.

## LIFE AND POLITICS

THE Liberal peace campaign should do useful service. The international outlook becomes steadily more threatening, and among the best minds there is a growing feeling of alarm. Sir Austen Chamberlain has become what Mr. Lloyd George called him in the Manchester speech, "an elegant ditto to M. Briand." The necessary task of warning the country of the trend of our foreign policy and its terrible dangers is one that Liberals can perform particularly well. On peace and disarmament, at all events, the Liberals have clear testimony to give. The Tory record and mentality we know only too well. The Labour Party, as a whole, have not the international mind; the tradition of Labour in this country is bellicose. League of Nations propaganda meets with a disappointingly small response from the working classes. The typical League of Nations audience in this country is middle class, and Liberal in the general sense. The most powerful advocates of disarmament on the platforms nowadays are politically detached generals and admirals, the men who know what

war means. They have become Liberal in outlook from the sheer pressure of experience. Field-Marshal Robertson, who is the latest peace recruit from the Army, made a speech at the League of Nations Union Conference last week which was extraordinarily impressive for its calm and ruthless summary of the waste and futility of the last war and of all wars. When one speaks of "Liberal" peace leadership, one is making no party point. It is the liberal-minded everywhere and in all parties who are feeling the need of a decisive struggle, before it is too late, against the menace of a tyranny of hatred and fear.

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The Parliamentary Labour Party intends to exert itself to the utmost against the Yorkshire wool trade unions that have gone Protectionist. The textile unions have set themselves against all constituted authority in the party and in the trade-union movement, both officially and by conviction Free Trade. It is cheering to see that the Labour Members for the textile constituencies have had the courage to tell these unions, on whose support their position depends, that they are wrong. The breakaway from Free Trade doctrine is sufficiently striking, but it is probably less important than it looks. Some of the largest and most powerful unions are against the change of policy, and it is very doubtful whether the decision to join the employers in demanding safeguarding for dress fabrics—a material largely imported from France—is in accordance with the wishes of the textile workers as a whole. Up to the present, the Protectionists have made singularly little progress in winning over the workers, even in the industries where a plausible case can be made out. It will be certainly most significant if the Yorkshire tendency spreads to iron and steel and other depressed trades which provide the Page-Crofts with the chief material for their campaign. I am constantly told that working people are peculiarly prone to be beguiled by appeals to the aggressive insularity which is the emotional basis of Protection. The working man may be ill-equipped as an economist, but he has always shown in these controversies a useful knowledge of what he is likely to suffer under Protection—and into whose pockets the swag, if any, will go.

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The effort of Dr. Salter and other Labour Members who belong to the Independent Labour Party to save that unhappy body from within is interesting. In his singularly candid article in the *NEW LEADER*, Dr. Salter makes it plain that the desire of his group is to prevent the I.L.P. from degenerating into a kind of aggressive uselessness. The trouble began with the ridiculous revolt of Mr. Maxton and Mr. Wheatley, aided (or hindered) from outside by Mr. Cook. The purpose of this crusade, which has now definitely failed, was to capture the I.L.P. for crude class-struggle Socialism, of the most uncompromising and futile type. It fell flat, and Mr. Maxton's leadership of the I.L.P. became (in Dr. Salter's image) that of a pirate who, with plenty of fanaticism and no knowledge of navigation, runs the ship—on the rocks. On the pirate's flag is inscribed the perfectly meaningless slogan, "Socialism in our Time." Mr. Maxton and his friends have not merely succeeded in cutting the I.L.P. adrift from the general Labour movement, but in alienating many leaders of the I.L.P. He is amiable, intelligent, but hopelessly narrow, and it is probable that Dr. Salter and the large number of able men who side with him will succeed in the end in rescuing the oldest Socialist organization in this country from disruption and decay.

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Sir Austen Chamberlain's lecture to the Press at the Pilgrims' dinner has been very properly resented by journalists. It really was a little too much. The fact is that

the newspapers, of all kinds, on both sides of the Atlantic, have shown not merely the greatest forbearance in avoiding any exploitation of the situation in the interests of sensationalism, but they have shown real anxiety to get us out of the mess into which Sir Austen's Government has blundered in its recent dealings with America. The Press, indeed, has prevented the situation from degenerating into an estrangement, and in so doing has expressed the passionate desire of the peoples for friendship and the closest possible co-operation, of which the Foreign Office and high personages generally seem to be only dimly aware. Sir Austen really must drop this *de-haut-en-bas* tone towards the Press; it is in any case intolerably old-fashioned, and he will not succeed, in the circumstances, in "getting away with it."

Sir Edward Parry was famous as a County Court judge who sought to do what was just in protecting the poor from being fleeced under the forms of law. I always admired him as a humane judge, and I like his books. I am glad to see that, having left the Bench, he is devoting his great powers and knowledge to an attempt at rousing the country to the need of legal reform. He says, what anyone who has been forced to contemplate adventuring upon a law action knows quite well, that "litigation is out of date because of the enormous delay and cost of it." That is a serious statement, but it is perfectly true. Lawyers know it better than anyone else, and to do them justice they normally advise their clients to conciliate rather than to fight. The position is simply that a High Court action is not for the poor man: unless he had an overwhelming case (and he never has), he would be a fool to risk it. A rich man may be able to afford the risk; hence the radical inequality of the rich and poor before the law. The costs of law proceedings are outrageous, beyond all reason, and this is generally admitted. Hence the paradox that honest lawyers keep their clients out of the courts if they can. The remedy suggested by Sir Edward Parry is quite possible and reasonable. Why not set up here Conciliation Courts, on the Scandinavian model, to which litigants can go without cost, or at small cost, to have their disputes investigated by trained and impartial judges whose job it would be to arrange settlements. In the vast majority of cases such settlements would be arrived at without difficulty. Something of the kind must come about unless we are to acquiesce in the view that the law is an expensive and inefficient luxury for the rich.

One is inclined to despair of our local authorities as the guardians of historic places when one hears of such a disgusting offence as the proposed slaughter house at Pevensey. It is really incredible, and one can only suppose that this time a blast of general indignation will destroy the scheme. The Eastbourne Rural District Council has actually approved of a huge slaughter house to be placed between the walls of Roman Anderida and the sea. Pevensey Castle is scheduled as an historic monument, so there is the hope that the Office of Works will wake up to the outrage. The thought of a miniature Chicago at that lonely and famous place and its consequent conversion into a "noxious area," does not bear thinking about. Before the war such a thing as this would hardly have been attempted, owing to the fear that then wholesomely existed of public anger; but for some reason nothing is too vile in the way of desecration to be attempted now in the name of commerce, and those who care for the old pieties and decencies fight a battle that constantly grows more difficult. Still, this is a little too gross to be tolerated—a shambles at the spot where the great Roman fortress still stands, and where

Duke William landed; a place of peace and majestic memories. It will not do.

I am inclined to think that the Home Secretary is right about the decay of greyhound racing. He has, however, no right to make the decline of the "sport" an excuse for the refusal of his Government to give local authorities the liberty to warn off the betting fraternity that runs the dog-betting trade from their towns if they wish to do so. Greyhound racing will probably persist as a nuisance in a few big cities where the betting people can be most easily mobilized in its support: elsewhere the craze will die, and, as was predicted, thousands of hopeful simpletons will lose money in mushroom companies. Greyhound racing was doomed from the start as an entertainment by its inherent dullness and stupidity, and it could only be defended by those who think it a fine example of British liberty to give to the poor unlimited opportunities of putting their money into the pockets of the bookmakers. There are signs already that the new tracks will be put to new and more attractive uses. I congratulate the people at Glasgow upon the bright notion of using the track at Carntyre for chariot racing on the Roman model. This sounds attractive, if only because it means employing that noble beast the horse—I confess I should like to see a good chariot race, instead of merely enjoying the fun second-hand in novelists and historians. There will be betting, of course, and if I lived near Carntyre, I would put a bit on the green or the white myself.

From a newspaper article on Lugano: "The marvellous gradations of tone on the flanks of the mountains may well distract the attention of visitors from the work in hand. They will note the long crescendo from rose to crimson-lake and the inevitable diminuendo by way of claret to smoky grey, while the moon (due about then) will rise over the snows of Camoghè, transmuting them to an almost unbelievable luminosity." This suggests one way in which the peace of Europe may be forwarded. One may imagine Sir Austen drawing the attention of Herr Stresemann, after a painful discussion, to the moon rising over the snows of Camoghè, while M. Briand holds forth on the scene in eloquence of almost unbelievable luminosity.

KAPPA.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### FRENCH WAR PREPARATION

SIR,—To my great regret I am obliged, in the interest of accuracy, to write once more on this important subject. I find that, as I thought, M. Daladier under-estimated the service of the debt which will next year be 49 per cent. of the French national expenditure, not, as he said, 41 per cent. My proportion of 24.9 per cent. for the military and naval expenditure was correct, according to the figure given by M. Painlevé in the Chamber—£90,080,000 in a total Budget of £361,800,000. I have now, however, discovered that M. Painlevé did not include in his figure the expenditure on the air force which in the Budget for 1929 is, for the first time, not included in the army and navy estimates, but is in a separate vote for the new Air Ministry. The total amount voted for aviation next year is £14,688,000, of which, according to the TEMPS, £10,184,000 are for the military and naval air forces. The total French expenditure next year on preparation for war will, therefore, in fact be £100,264,000—27.7 per cent. of the whole Budget and 54 per cent. of the national expenditure other than the service of the debt. It follows that the increase on the expenditure of 1928 is much larger than M. Painlevé represented it to be.

I should like to correct a mistake of my own. Having had occasion to look up some newspaper cuttings of 1913, I find that the Three-year Law did not, as I said in THE NATION of December 1st, retain under the colours the con-



scripts whose period of two years had expired. The Bill, as originally drafted, proposed to retain them, but the demonstrations against the proposal in the barracks all over France obliged the Government to drop it and, to attain the same end—an immediate increase of 50 per cent. in the active conscript army—the age for beginning military service was altered from twenty-one to twenty. This enabled two annual contingents of conscripts to be called up in 1913—the men of twenty-one were called up early in October, and those of twenty a month later, when the senior class under the colours were released, having served only one month more than their two years. This correction, which I make for the sake of accuracy, does not alter the fact that, as M. Montigny said, the Three-year Law was a partial mobilization by an oblique method in preparation for the war expected by the French General Staff to break out in the spring of 1914.—Yours, &c.,

ROBERT DELL.

December 10th, 1928.

### THE NARDINI VERDICT

SIR,—Will you allow me to add a few words of explanation to your editorial note in THE NATION of December 8th as to the reasons of the irritation aroused in Italy by the astonishing Nardini verdict? In the first place, the murderer Di Modugno had not applied for a passport to go to America, but had come to fill up an application to enable his wife to join him, and his only grievance appears to have been the delay involved in the proceedings; but even this does not seem to have greatly disturbed him, as he only went to the Consulate three times in several months. Secondly, he complained of having been arrested and kept in prison for nine months in Italy in 1921 (i.e., long before the Fascist Government had come into being) for acts of criminal violence and arson, which are hardly sufficient to entitle him to sympathy. Thirdly, from the evidence produced at the trial it appears that during the year Di Modugno had spent in France and Luxemburg he had not done a stroke of work, except for a few days, but had lived on the subsidies of the Communist Party and spent his time on Communist propaganda. Fourthly, the murdered Italian Vice-Consul was a kindly old man, beloved of the whole Italian colony in Paris, who had never done any harm to anyone, least of all to Di Modugno, and who was wholly outside politics. Finally, as the French paper LA LIBERTÉ reminded its readers, no less than eighty-two other murders or attempted murders had already been committed against Italian Fascists by Communists in France.

According to the detailed assertions supported by strong evidence, published in the LIBERTÉ, the ECHO DE PARIS, and the INTRANSIGENT, vigorous "pressure" was brought to bear on some of the jurymen on the day before the verdict to force them to deal leniently with Di Modugno. As a distinguished English scholar recently wrote in an important provincial daily in this connection, "it is in the highest degree dangerous to the peace of Europe that a representative of one nation should be deliberately murdered in the capital of another, and that the offence should be treated lightly."—Yours, &c.,

LUIGI VILLARI.

8, Duke Street, St. James's Square, S.W.1.

December 10th, 1928.

### SUMMARY JURISDICTION IN THE METROPOLIS—IS THERE MUCH WRONG?

SIR,—This matter of legal aid for the poor man in the Police Court is of such public importance that it is sad to find that Mr. Gardner, who writes so wisely of the need for the right treatment of the offender, attaches so little importance to the right of the accused to a fair trial.

It is true that the London Stipendiary Magistrates do much to mitigate the injustice that society does to the poor by refusing to provide legal aid in the Summary Courts. But it is idle to say that the magistrate, inclined by his training to that detachment which his office requires, can act in every case as an effective counsel for the defence. The solicitor sees his client alone before the trial, hears his

story and that of his friends. Reviewing the facts, he builds up a defence as to law and fact, calls witnesses to support that defence, and cross-examines the witnesses for the prosecution in the light of knowledge. The magistrate sees the accused man for the first time in the dock, unless he is an old offender, in which case familiarity suggests the presumption of guilt. He has no knowledge of the facts save as they emerge from the answers given by the bewildered and often inarticulate prisoner. Like Justice, the magistrate is blindfold so that he may hold the scales without fear or favour. He cannot act as counsel for the defence, and bring out the hidden facts which may acquit the accused or serve in mitigation of sentence. I have myself heard one of our ablest and most kindly judges trying hard and utterly ineffectually to get the saving truth out of a boorish and puzzled defendant. I have heard the same judge thank the counsel for the defence in another case for having helped the Court to reach a just decision. The statement of the case for the defence is a necessary ingredient in a fair trial. We owe it to the magistrate, as well as to the accused, to provide that statement. If the services of a lawyer are so worthless as Mr. Gardner suggests, one is lost in wonder at the unanimity with which rich men persist in the folly of employing solicitors and counsel.

Mr. Gardner says that "the muddled statement from the dock made by the accused person who finds it impossible to put his comments in the form of questions, is always permitted by the experienced magistrate." I know of one magistrate, of many years' experience, even on the Metropolitan Bench, who permits nothing of the sort. I know of another who ruled out a prisoner's story as incredible, because it conflicted with the evidence of a policeman, and of yet another who, during the last few weeks, sent a boy of seventeen to prison for a first offence. The fact is that Mr. Gardner, in his tour of the Metropolitan Courts, has not seen a single instance of glaring injustice to the poor prisoner. No one ever supposed that he would. The worst magistrate in England (and he does not sit on the London Bench) would not do injustice knowingly, and if he did, society would soon demand and secure redress. Injustice that is seen is no injustice. We are required to guard against the injustice which looks like justice because it is known to none but its victims. It is like the lie in the soul which Plato knew was the one disastrous lie, destroying life and freedom.

That is why the Howard League for Penal Reform places Legal Aid for the Poor in the forefront of its programme, and that is why members of all parties are united in support of the Poor Prisoners' Defence Bill introduced by Mr. J. J. Withers, himself a lawyer with wide practical experience of the Courts.—Yours, &c.,

CICELY M. CRAVEN, Hon. Secretary.

The Howard League for Penal Reform.

23, Charing Cross, Whitehall, S.W.1.

### CHRISTMAS AND THE MINERS

SIR,—At this time of the year, every newspaper one opens is full of suggestions for Christmas gifts, mainly for those who are already supplied with all, and more than all, they need.

The following plan has been devised by one family to meet the present urgent call for help—it is meant to apply to "grown ups" only.

A circular letter is sent to each member and to intimate friends, asking them to send the amount they mean to spend on presents for any or all of the others, in cash or bank-notes enclosed in blank envelopes to the head of the family (or some other appropriate person). These anonymous gifts are then "pooled" and equally divided among all the donors, to each of whom remittance is sent with a request to forward it to the Friends' Headquarters, Euston Road, N.W. (or any other fund preferred).

The Society of Friends are, of course, great experts in constructive relief work in devastated areas. They are now helping to alleviate immediate distress in the coalfields, and they are training young men upon the land in some areas with a view to ultimate emigration. Those who would like to earmark their gifts for any particular area can do so.



By adopting the above plan it is hoped that the natural warmth of affection for family and personal friends will not be checked, but diverted—to the unemployed miners. They—with their dependants and neighbours—are living under conditions only comparable to those in the war devastated areas of ten years ago—but without the world-wide sympathy then forthcoming.

Only now—after months of privation and suffering—is the truth slowly emerging into the light of publicity, when winter is actually upon the sufferers.—Yours, &c.,

NORTH WALIAN.

December 11th, 1928.

### THE PROPOSED SACRISTY

SIR,—The Committee of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings asks me to express its grateful appreciation to you for the paragraph on the proposed Sacristy at Westminster Abbey which appeared in your issue of December 1st.

Confusion of opinion about this proposal is so often met that it may be as well to restate the authority and rights which are possessed by those whom the matter concerns.

As the law and custom now is, the Dean and Chapter have full power to order any addition or alteration to the Abbey Church that they, holding this office for the time being, wish to make. The same is the case in regard to the Cathedrals.

The public who uses and enjoys these buildings and the people this authority serves, have no power to forbid a change that is not liked. Yet in the end it will be admitted by all but a few that these buildings are monuments belonging to the nation.

It seems evident that the majority of the public, guided by most of those who are qualified to speak, upholds that the Abbey Church will suffer from the proposed addition to a greater extent than will be justified by the advantages to be gained from it.

The difference between moral and legal rights in regard to the Cathedrals and this Church, a difference which has not been forced to the front hitherto, is now thus in danger of too great prominence. Most people would rather leave this question in quiet obscurity. I believe that to insist on the building of the Sacristy is a trespass on the public rights which will not be settled without harm to the Church. Conflict on such matters is surely undesirable.

It should further be clearly recognized that none would argue that the Abbey authorities are mistaken when they say they require a Sacristy in order to carry on that part of their duty which concerns the use of the building and not the structure itself. There is no question of whether there should or should not be a new Sacristy; there is only the question of whether it should stand where the model now is.

That the place now chosen for the building is very convenient no one denies, but were it to become a reality the outside form of the Abbey would suffer and the appearance would be disfigured. An examination of possible approaches to the Sacristy from within reveals that the new building can hardly be entered save by the destruction or removal of monuments that are valuable and historically interesting. The new building also is an encroachment on an open space that Londoners will see diminished with feelings of strong regret.

There are other sites where the Sacristy could be made, less convenient it is true, but with so much less hurt to the Church as to make that loss one which should be endured without complaint by the Dean and Chapter.—Yours, &c.,

A. R. POWYS, Secretary.

20, Buckingham Street, Adelphi, W.C.2.

December 10th, 1928.

### SUNDAY IN WESTMINSTER

SIR,—I was naturally flattered to find that a sermon of mine was considered worthy of comment in your pages. But my satisfaction was a little dashed by the discovery that your reporter's description of the discourse bore not the faintest resemblance to anything I said on the only recent occasion on which I have preached in the Abbey—nor, so

far as my memory serves me, to anything I have ever said there. I can only explain the phenomenon in one of two ways; either your reporter slept throughout the sermon and fathered his dreams upon the preacher, or he did not ascertain who the preacher was.

But neither explanation is very satisfactory. The first seems to suggest a certain lack of honesty in him, the second argues a carelessness which is hardly to be expected in a responsible journalist. So I am left wondering what the real explanation can be.—Yours, &c.,

C. S. WOODWARD.

Westminster Abbey.

December 5th, 1928.

### THE FUTURE OF HUMOUR

SIR,—A *propos* of your review under the above title on page 379 of last week's issue, may I recall a saying of George Eliot. I think it is in "Daniel Deronda," but perhaps some of your readers can speak with certainty, both as to source and as to exactness of wording, "A difference of taste in jests is a great strain on the affections." This fact may have an international bearing.

A. NEAVE BRAYSHAW.

72, Westborough, Scarborough.  
December 9th, 1928.

### DRAGONS AT FRÉJUS

By WINIFRED HOLTBY.

THE big car rippled over the red undulations of the coastal road, and the occupants gazed out with complacent proprietorship upon the mild autumnal sunlight of the French Riviera. They felt that it was theirs by right, as indeed it was, since they had bought it as they bought most other comforts of life. Only such comforts as electric radiators or mink coats went to them, whereas they themselves had to go to the Riviera sunlight. This made it, indeed, even more exclusively theirs, since to go cost not only money but time. Their pride was justified.

"This Entente business," began the Host. He had taken in the car with him a copy of the Continental edition of the DAILY MAIL. "I always told you that we should come a mucker with America, though I never liked the French myself."

His wife, hating politics at all times, murmured faintly, "Oh, not in the car, Jim"; but Gresham, who as a novelist had the expensive reputation of an Intellectual to maintain, remarked:

"Foch gave us another fifteen years before the next war. And that was—five? Or eight years ago?"

"My dear, how too sweet!"

"The prospect of a war? Or my inability to remember dates?"

"Those too unutterably darling little dragons. My dear, do stop the driver. This car is like fate, simply too inexorable."

The car was stopped. The lady jumped out on to the warm, red sand at the side of the road. Reluctantly yielding to her whims, her husband and the novelist followed. She retreated twenty yards down the road and stood at the foot of a broad, shallow flight of steps.

Above and around them rose the red, pine-covered hills to a brilliantly clear, blue sky. Below and behind them the sea lay mint-green, green as the thorny little shrubs dusting the feet of the pines, green as the grass that should have covered the dry soil, green as a lawn that had slipped and fallen on to the level plain of water leaving the hills naked. The landscape was French. The chauffeur, lolling in the car, was French. The cart rocking slowly up the hill was French. But the steps were suddenly and disconcertingly Chinese.

A low parapet rose each side of the stairway, and at intervals of about three feet, on each parapet, sat the dragons. There they were, a neat, docile company modelled rather roughly in plaster and painted gay oriental colours—cobalt blue, green, scarlet, and gold. There was a dragon like a cow, with a candid forehead and placid eyes; but instead of meek hoofs fashioned for wandering among the buttercups it had fierce claws and a terrific spiky tail. There was a dragon like a Pekinese puppy, imperfectly developed from a dinosaur. There was a dragon like a porcupine, several of whose plaster quills had lamentably snapped, and lay discarded under its curving belly. There was a dragon like a bird, and a dragon like a snake, and a dragon like nothing in the world except a dragon. They sat, mild and patient in their absurd and decorative ferocity, and the lady, her husband, and her guest, climbed the shallow steps between them.

"Aren't they too amazing? What a find! Who can have put them here?" she crooned in ecstasy.

At the head of the stairs a gate, curiously curved, made a startling Chinese shape against the sky.

"Oh, what is it? What is it? Go and ask the chauffeur. Quick, Jim!"

The chauffeur, indifferent but alert, climbed from the car and mounted the steps.

"Cemetery—Oriental—Military camp at Fréjus," he explained.

"But it's Chinese. It's Chinese!" She was leaning over the wall; she passed through the gate; she was running up to a little temple on the left. "Look! There's a Chinese temple—just like all the pictures. Look! Curling gables, my dear! And scrolly things. And silk banners absolutely covered with spangles!"

The small, almond-eyed guard lounging by the door looked at her with incurious detachment.

"Don't know if we ought to go in," said her husband. "They mightn't like it."

"Oh, but of course we must. Why there's a brass gong! And a Buddha! Is it a Buddha? Are Chinese Buddhists? I thought they were Shinto or Mongolian or something? Or is that the Japanese? My dear, and the graves—look—hundreds of them—all with little posts and names. They can't all be Chinese. Why, look—here's a Christian with R.I.P. on it! Jim, do ask why there are Christians all mixed up with Buddhists and things."

The chauffeur, interrogated, again explained. "Oriental or African. Many of the Africans are good Catholics. All foreigners."

"Oh, oh."

She stood among the graves, looking from crosses wreathed with white wire and china Christian garlands, broken white china doves and flowers and weeping angels, to the curved and gorgeous brilliance of the heathen temple.

"Oh—," she repeated, softly.

From the pine woods below came the soft notes of a bugle, thin little curling notes—like puffs of smoke—that faded in the clear air. From higher on the hill another answered it. All round the cemetery among the pines stood groups of four or five African soldiers practising bugle calls. Even from where she stood she could see the black profile of one bugler, impassive and gay with the incorrigible gaiety of the African. He lifted the bugle in his black, pink-palméd hands and blew. But the notes were European notes which died among French pine-trees. The African left no enduring mark of his civilization on French soil.

Gresham, the novelist, felt that the occasion called for cleverness. He came towards her, smiled intimately, and improvised, parodying:—

"Blow, bugles, blow—the little plaster dragons  
Green, blue and red, guarding the shallow stair—

Make here a corner that is ever Asia—  
Or Africa—does it much matter where?"

"Oh, go on!" she said, flashing at him her brilliant smile, yet not quite easy.

"Blow, bugles, blow over the rich dead, lying  
Christian and heathen, in this soldiers' grave—  
Chinese and African, in death enjoying  
The True Democracy they died to save."

Her husband was looking at the guard. "Do you think we ought to tip that fellow?"

"I don't know. I shouldn't," said Gresham. "With tips, when in doubt, don't. It's cheaper."

They didn't. They went down to the car; but as they passed, she caressed the plaster dragons with her delicate white fingers.

"They look homesick," she said. "I wonder, did the soldiers make them?"

Her husband interpreted to the chauffeur. "Yes, they did."

A troop of black-faced horsemen clattered past on the road. She climbed into the car.

"How many men are there in training here?"

The encyclopædic chauffeur was feeling his tyres. "I am not sure. Ten thousand? Thirty thousand? It is a large camp. We train here the French troops from overseas."

"Good material for the next war," grunted her husband. "As I was saying, this Entente business. . . ."

As the car started again, she looked back at the dragons.

"I'm dying for a cigarette, Jim," she said. But her mind was crying, for the first time since he had married her, "Oh, I'm glad I haven't got a son—I'm glad. I'm glad."

## THE SEASON OF CHARITY

THE sentimental aspect of Christmas may sometimes seem a little overdone, and those who are by no means Scrooges may argue that there should be no need to mark one sacred festival more than another by an attempt to be more genial, more amiable, and more generally charitable to one's fellows. It is all very well, they say, to talk about a season of good will, but this implies that it supplants seasons of ill will. There is something more than a trifle artificial in the forced hilarity with which Christmas is often celebrated, and one is suspicious (even certain) that it cannot make much permanent difference to the mean, the cross-grained, and the misanthropic.

But our ancestors liked this way of ordering days of rejoicing and days of penance, of feast and fast, of marking in their calendars the emotions suitable to these occasions, and argued that if a whole community direct their thoughts to those ends of joy or of mourning they may be achieved. But doubtless they thought less bitterly of the cheerful fellow who, waking on Good Friday morning to the singing of birds and the promise of an early spring, found joy in his heart than they did of the sour-faced visitor to their Christmas revels.

The fact is they had a great deal of sense on their side. Collective rejoicing and collective mourning are both very infectious, and as we all of us have in us a strong capacity for grief and joy, perhaps it is as well that we should have seasons when we may show our recognition of the appropriateness of the one or the other with no special limit being set upon us.

"Christmas is coming. Cold weather, snow in the streets, mincepies, and our little boys and girls home for the holidays. Kind-hearted people's donations to the poor

boxes. Turkeys from the country; goose clubs in town; plums and candied citron in the grocers' shops; hot elder wine; snapdragon; hunt the slipper; and the butchers' and bakers' quarterly bills. The great anniversary of humanity gives signs of its approach, and, with it, joyfulness and unbending and unstarching of white neckcloths and genial charity and genial handshaking which once a year at least dispel the fog of caste and prejudice in this land of England."

I am not perfectly aware who wrote these lines, but as they appeared, in the year 1851, in a Christmas number of *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*, I strongly suspect that it was Mr. Charles Dickens himself. They serve well enough as an illustration. They record the general impression that, at this time of the year, we should be more genial and charitable, and if we cannot be over-joyful, at least we should wear a loose collar to the world.

To be open, this argument is leading up to a consideration of charity, in particular more than in general, and this Christmas, unhappily, we have one imperative demand which has seldom been equalled in urgency during the unhappiest periods of our history. The critical condition of the miners is being brought home more clearly every day to those of us who dwell in less disturbed parts. Every day we may read heartrending accounts of the suffering of men, women, and children in South Wales and in the North to whom any hope of permanent relief seems for the moment denied. For themselves they despair of any real alleviation of their lot, and this despair is made daily darker by lack of nourishment and clothing. The problem is far too serious to be dealt with by piecemeal charity, but there can be no question that in considering any Christmas offering their needs should stand first. It would be pleasant to feel that even one small household had been made for the moment the happier by the gift of a hamper of food and good clothing. But if we are to join in any widespread movement of relief, from which any ultimate good may come, it would be better to reserve our subscriptions for one of the main organizations such as the Lord Mayors' Fund or the fund of the Society of Friends, or to help set on foot the admirable adoption scheme which has started so favourably. If only this idea could be put forward in time, what more suitable subject for a Christmas meeting?

From the innumerable other appeals which are issued at this time of the year, how difficult it is to select any for special mention. It is so obviously a matter of individual interest and sympathy. St. Nicholas is the patron saint of children, of sailors, and of travellers. In honour of his patronage it seems a very suitable time to remember the claims of such institutions as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which is always energetic and claims the sympathy of all humane persons, or of the Shaftesbury Homes and Arethusa Training Ship, which set young lads, who otherwise might not have a chance, on the first steps of an honourable and useful career.

With tragedy so freshly in their minds, they will need no reminder (as travellers) from their patron saint, of the perils of the deep. The plight of the dependents of the Rye lifeboat crew would indeed have been desperate had it not been for the immediate and generous subscriptions of a sympathetic public. The calamity brought home with greater vividness than ever the risks and dangers and prolonged hardships which the volunteer crews of our lifeboats suffer in their attempt to save life. As the Royal National Lifeboat Institution is the only central organization providing for the needs of our lifeboat service, its claims should not be forgotten.

There is a legend of St. Nicholas, which is said to account for our unbroken practice of keeping Christmas

presents secret until the very ordained moment for their presentation, that he once secretly gave dowries to the three daughters of an impoverished merchant, to save them from being sold into a life of shame—so Santa Claus is at our side again when the Josephine Butler Appeal is brought to our notice, a charity which, one may be sure, is very delicately and wisely administered.

The rescue work of the Church Army, based, as it is, on the self-help principle, is always in need of and deserving of support. More particularly one may mention their night shelters for men and women, their training farms for youths, homes for training girls for domestic service, and their "Work Aid" Embankment Home.

The object of the National Institute for the Blind, for the funds of which Captain Sir Beachcroft Towse, V.C., issues an appeal, is so to train and help the dependent blind that they may become happy and self-supporting men and women. This is an invaluable work, and entirely deserving of every possible encouragement.

There is a side of Christmas charity which should most certainly not be overlooked, and that is one which should appeal to all fortunate children who may be clearing their toy cupboards in the certain hope of fresh supplies. There are many children's hospitals all over the country which are always glad of good toys, of dolls and their paraphernalia, outgrown. There are the organized Play Centres for slum children (such as Melmoth Hall in Fulham) where gifts such as these are most gratefully welcomed.

In conclusion, it is our annual custom to offer our services to any of the charitably disposed of our readers who may wish to draw a general cheque and have it distributed in quarters selected by themselves, or if they care to trust our judgment to allow us the privilege of making a selection ourselves. Such cheques should be sent to the Editor of *THE NATION*, 38, Great James Street, W.C.1.

J. B. S. B.

## MUSIC

### THE MOOR DOUBLE-KEYBOARD PIANO

ONE of the most interesting events of the present concert season has been the re-emergence of the double-keyboard piano invented by Mr. Emanuel Moor. It may be remembered that when first introduced here about seven or eight years ago it created a considerable stir. Long and enthusiastic articles about it filled the musical Press, in which the new instrument was claimed to be "one of the epoch-making inventions of music" (Ernest Newman), and we were assured that it was only a matter of time before it must inevitably supersede the ordinary piano as the latter had superseded the harpsichord. After this meteoric *début*, however, little more was heard of it, so far as this country was concerned at least, and it seemed as if the double-keyboard piano had been relegated to the vast and dreary limbo in which so many promising inventions lie neglected and forgotten.

In this assumption we were evidently mistaken. Within the last few months it has taken on a new lease of life. Classes for the study of the new instrument have been instituted in many of the most important Continental conservatoires, Miss Winifred Christie has recently been giving recitals upon it at the Queen's Hall, and Herr Backhaus, one of the leading virtuosos of the day, has announced his intention of using it exclusively in the near future at all his public appearances. The time has come, in fact, when the new invention must be taken seriously as a potential rival to, and even as a possible supplanter of,



the piano. The effects of such a future development on both the creative and executive aspects of musical art obviously deserve careful consideration.

It may, I think, be admitted without hesitation that most, if not all, of the claims made on its behalf by the inventor and his sponsors were amply substantiated at Miss Christie's recent recitals. Many passages which present technical problems of the first magnitude when played on the old instrument become comparatively simple on the new, and the way in which—to take only one single example out of many possible ones—rapid octave passages can be played with a smooth *legato* phrasing constitutes a technical resource which is not available on the ordinary piano.

The all-important point arises, however, whether we want these seeming improvements or not. The question is not so easily decided in the affirmative as one might imagine, or as the enthusiastic but unthinking eulogies of so many musicians might lead one to suppose. In the first place it seems to be an unalterable condition in every department of human activity that progress in one direction can only be achieved at the expense of retrogression in another. With musical instruments the most familiar form that this retrogression assumes is that of a decline in the quality of tone. The tone-colour of the valve-horn, for example, is noticeably inferior to that of the old natural horn, that of the modern small trumpet to that of the old F trumpet, that of the chromatic harp or of the chromatic drum to that of the original form of either instrument—to such an extent, indeed, that the two latter "improvements," despite the immense technical advantages they possess over their more primitive rivals, have not yet succeeded, and probably never will succeed, in displacing them. We prefer to make shift with the older instruments, judging their manifold deficiencies to be a lesser evil than the degradation of tone which is involved in the enrichment of resources.

Now, I do not profess to know whether a decline in the quality of tone-colour is, technically speaking, an inevitable concomitant of Mr. Moor's invention, although all the foregoing precedents and the apparently unescapable consequences of the working of the law of compensation would seem to suggest that it is. All I can say with certainty is that at Miss Christie's recitals at the Queen's Hall the quality of sound produced from it was distinctly inferior to that which we are accustomed to hear from the ordinary piano, and that is nothing much to boast about—so much so, in fact, that it was at times definitely unpleasant. This may, of course, have been the fault of the particular instrument, or even of the particular player, but neither explanation is probable, since, in the first place, trouble would surely have been taken to secure the best instrument available for such an important test occasion, and, secondly, Miss Christie, if not an absolutely first-rate player, is at least a very good one.

However that may be, let us suppose for a moment that the new instrument is not necessarily inferior to the old in the matter of tone-colour. There still remains another, even more important, point to be considered, namely, that connected with the enormous part played by instrumental limitations in our aesthetic pleasure. When the limits of technical capacity are extended the centre of aesthetic gravity is displaced; when they are removed altogether chaos results. As soon as we are able to play practically anything within reason on an instrument its character is inevitably destroyed. The pianola is an instructive example of this. The reason why it has never become an artistic medium for the composer is not to be found, as is popularly supposed, in its mechanical nature. All instruments are to a greater or lesser extent mechanisms,

and experience has shown that the best pianolas are capable of giving a better performance of a difficult work than ninety-nine out of one hundred human players. The reason is simply that it has no limitations. A few years ago some composers attempted to write pieces specially for the pianola, with the most lamentable results; being able to do anything they could do absolutely nothing. The characteristic piano medium was destroyed; all the pieces sounded simply like transcriptions of orchestral works, and had consequently no aesthetic *raison d'être*.

Now, the Moor piano is a kind of compromise between the piano and the pianola. It does not remedy the defects of the piano in the way that the valve-horn undoubtedly remedied the defects of the natural horn, but only makes difficult passages easy and extends the already too wide limits of pianistic possibilities. The trouble with the ordinary piano, indeed, is that it can do too much, not that it can do too little. The dearth of really great piano writing at the present time is largely the consequence of the enormous increase in virtuosity and the perfection of mechanism. Since Liszt there has been no composer capable of administering the whole of the vast territory of piano technique; the composer must now impose restrictions on himself in place of those formerly supplied by the instrument, which is a very difficult thing to do.

In short, never was any instrument in less need of mechanical improvement than the piano, and the only possible consequence of the universal adoption of the Moor double-keyboard will be the complete destruction of the delicate equipoise between idea and medium, between the means and the end, which largely conditions our aesthetic enjoyment. One positive advantage the new instrument undoubtedly possesses, in that it extends still further the capacity of the piano, which is one of its most valuable assets, to play satisfactory transcriptions of orchestral and other complex instrumental music. But this, after all, the pianola can do still better, so that even from a purely utilitarian point of view the new instrument has no justification for its existence.

CECIL GRAY.

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

THE Everyman Theatre are to be thanked for producing "Little Eyolf," one of the most rarely acted and in some ways the greatest of all Ibsen's plays. In no other work does Ibsen push his method to such ruthless conclusions. After the first scene, in which the crutch is seen floating on the waters, no external action diverts us from the internal struggles of the protagonists. We are treated to a jigsaw puzzle in moral anguishes and a continual succession of hideous revelations, till everybody, having made a completely clean breast of all their sins, can face the world with a renewed serenity. I am only rather doubtful whether Ibsen, like so many other great dramatists, was not getting rather bored with the theatre by the time he came to the fruition of his powers. "Little Eyolf" is perhaps not so much a play as a "pure work of art" like the "Tempest." If superbly acted, more might come from seeing the play on the stage. Alfred Allmers must be an appallingly difficult part. Mr. Rupert Harvey tried to solve the problem by presenting him as a man in a muddle overwhelmed by his discoveries about himself. The conception was not an unintelligent one, but it let down the tempo of the play and destroyed the balance of his relations with Rita, who was played by Miss Mary Merrill in a tradition of French virtuosity, which however much we may dislike it was probably Ibsen's idea of how his plays should be acted. A special word of praise is due to the décor, which was far less dingy than that common in Ibsen productions. Admitted that the Allmers were better off than most Ibsen families, the extremely pretty late Victorian dresses, particularly those worn by Asta, might well make their appearance in other plays of the Ibsen cycle.

"The Play's the Thing," after Ferencz Molnar, adapted by P. G. Wodehouse, is a very trifling, but quite intelligent essay in Pirandellianism, consisting of a continual variation on the play within the play theme. Though the ice is always thin, the skaters never quite go through, and the audience is kept in an agreeable state of mild agitation. The dialogue is often witty, and considerable ingenuity of situation is shown throughout. Sir Gerald du Maurier produced the play very well, and Mr. Edmond Breon is always excellent company on the stage. Apparently the play was howled down on the first night, but Sir Gerald did the most brilliant demagogic turn in front of the footlights before the curtain went up, and completely saved the situation, on the second night. "The Play's the Thing" will probably remain rather caviare, but nobody can deny that Sir Gerald is one of the greatest diplomatists in history.

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Miss Clemence Dane has attempted a very difficult task in her "Adam's Opera," which is now being presented at the Old Vic. It is a sort of modern "morality" play, founded on the story of the "Sleeping Beauty," the subject being the eternal quest of Beauty by Man; Beauty is the Sleeping Princess, awakened by Adam in company with his two friends, Tom Tiddler and Tom Fiddler, representing Business and the Arts. Other characters are Mother Earth, the Man in the Street, Mr. and Mrs. Grundy, the Political Parties, "Nobody," a jester, the Servants in the Sleeping Beauty's Castle, representing the populace, &c. It is perhaps due to the rather limited resources of production that the whole effect is rather patchy and lacking in unity; one is reminded now of a pantomime, now of a modern revue, now of Gilbert and Sullivan, now of Maeterlinck. The play also drags a good deal at moments, especially in the first part, but towards the end pulls itself together and is well written and dramatic. The music, arranged by Mr. Richard Addinsell, is adequate, and it was a good idea to incorporate various nursery rhyme tunes. The acting and singing, as always at the Old Vic, was enthusiastic and sincere, if not always perfectly accomplished.

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Mr. Benn W. Levy's first play, "This Woman Business," was produced first at the Royalty and afterwards transferred to the Haymarket. The former was the original home of "Milestones," and the latter of "Mary Rose"; and Mr. Levy seems, in "Mrs. Moonlight," his new play at the Kingsway, to have assimilated a fair amount of each. This is not to accuse him of plagiarism. The three-generation play and the adolescent whose appearance remains the same until death, are not new ideas, and have been used many times. But Mrs. Moonlight has much in common with the Barrie and the Bennett-Knoblock heroines. She moves us to tears when we feel that her sentimentality ought to be outraging our critical susceptibility; and we watch the development of her character and attitude towards her family through nearly fifty years. The trouble with all plays that assume an unpalatable hypothesis, such as Mrs. Moonlight's eternal youth, is that while one is prepared to meet the author in his initial assumption, there are always corollaries which have to be logically treated, and when logic gets mixed up with fantasy there is the devil to pay. In this case it is necessary for Mrs. Moonlight not to be recognized when, supposed dead, she returns to her husband as her own niece. Given the circumstances, she would obviously have been recognized—and there would be no more play. Miss Joan Barry, whom I have always regarded as a pretty actress who could play nothing but pretty parts, gives an astonishingly good performance as Mrs. Moonlight, treating the difficult last scene, in which she dies at the age of seventy but looking twenty-one, with intelligence, subtlety, and charm. Mr. Quartermaine, as her husband, can do this sort of thing with consummate ease, and has never done it better.

\* \* \*

The pathetic clown is always a safe theatrical card to play, but Mr. Nelson Keys and Messrs. Arthur

Hopkins and George Manker Watters, the authors of "Burlesque," at the Queen's, are evidently not the right people to play it. Mr. Keys is a fine revue artist and "vignettist," but he cannot command an ounce of sympathy; and the play is chock full of that brand of sickly, soul-baring sentiment which is peculiar to American dramatists. The characters keep on telling each other man-to-man truths about their emotions which make one writhe with shame and spiritual discomfort and pray for the programme-promised land of the last act, with its "Scene 2: the Opening Performance." Even if "Burlesque" were unsullied by sentimentality, it would be streets behind "Broadway," another play of "back-stage life," in which the cabaret turns and undressing chorus girls were but the trimmings of a story of real human beings, with no sobstuff and nonsense about it. For this reason, probably, the idiomatic language is harder to follow in "Burlesque," since the play depends on dialogue and situation rather than character. A dialect play (which is what this one amounts to) should be intelligible as a whole, without causing the audience to stop and ponder over the meaning of isolated phrases. If one sees "plastered comic with a rubber spine" in print, no great stretch of the imagination is required to translate it into "knockabout comedian"; but when it is hurled at one in a theatre at lightning speed in the course of a play with no characterization, one is bound to miss a line or two before arriving at its meaning. The pan-American cast supporting Mr. Keys is efficient but not distinguished.

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Mr. Anthony Asquith's new film "Underground," in which he is responsible for the story, scenario, and production, is being shown at the Marble Arch Pavilion, and gives one renewed faith in the possibilities of British films. Here, at any rate, is one British producer with real imagination and intelligence and what may be described as a sense of the films. The story is an unpretentious melodrama, unpretentiously produced, of humble life in London, and concerns the loves and jealousies of an Underground porter, an electrician, a shop-girl, and a seamstress. These four parts are taken respectively by Mr. Brian Aherne, Mr. Cyril McLaglen, Miss Elissa Landi, and Miss Nora Baring, all of whom act with vitality and restraint, and appear really to have studied the types they represent, instead of giving the usual film star's version which is so very remote from reality. And Mr. Asquith has succeeded admirably, with the help of his art director, Mr. Ian Campbell Gray, in conveying the importance of London as a background, not by means of irrelevant and spectacular views, but as the everyday setting of the lives of his characters. His pictures of the Underground railway, the moving staircases, a scene on the Embankment, the interior of a cheap boarding-house, and the really thrilling photographs of the Lot's Road Power Station, are all extraordinarily good and have an air of complete sincerity. "Underground" was preceded by "Round Africa with Cobham," which contains some very remarkable photographs of the landscape and inhabitants of Africa, both from the air and from the earth.

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Things to see and hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, December 15th.—

"Pickwick," at the Haymarket.

"Cinderella," at the Children's Theatre.

Myra Hess and Jelly d'Aranyi, Sonata Recital, Queen's Hall, 8.

Carols, by the Royal Choral Society, Royal Albert Hall, 2.30.

Tony Close, 'Cello Recital, Wigmore Hall, 8.

Stuart Robertson and Mona Leigh, Song and Violin Recital, Victoria and Albert Museum, 8.

Sunday, December 16th.—

Mr. H. W. Nevins, on "A Glimpse of the Near East," South Place, 11.

Film: "Dracula," at the New Gallery Kinema, 2.30 (Film Society).

Handel's "Messiah," at the Royal Albert Hall, 8 (Royal Philharmonic Orchestra).

Tuesday, December 18th.—

Oriana Madrigal Society's Christmas Concert, Æolian Hall, 8.15.

Mr. John Drinkwater, on "Stamp Collecting," the Wireless, 7.25.

Wednesday, December 19th.—

"Peter Pan," at the Garrick.

"Eager Heart," at the Church House, Westminster, 3.30 (December 19th, 21st, and 22nd).

Bach Choir, at the Queen's Hall, 8.15.

Mr. H. M. Tomlinson, on "Good Morning, America," the Wireless, 9.15.

Thursday, December 20th.—

"In Other Words," Revue, at the Carlton.

"The Patsy," by Mr. Barry Connors, at the Apollo.

"The Last Hour," by Mr. Charles Bennett, at the Comedy.

Brailowsky, Pianoforte Recital, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

Friday, December 21st.—

Mr. Paul Edmonds, on "Burma and the Burmese," an Illustrated Christmas Lecture for Young People, Edward VII. Rooms, Hotel Victoria, 8.

OMICRON.

## THE ARTIST

As an old tree, withstanding winter's rages,  
Forms a few blossoms out of sap and mud,  
Two years he toiled, destroyed a thousand pages,  
And then filled ten with words as bright as blood.

WILLIAM PLOMER.

## London Amusements.

### MATINEES FOR THE WEEK.

**COURT.** Thurs., Sat., & Dec. 26, 28, 2.30. "THE CRITIC," etc.  
**DUKE OF YORK'S.** Wed., Sat. & 27, 28, 2.30. **SUCH MEN ARE DANGEROUS.**  
**DRURY LANE.** Wed. & Sat., 2.30. **SHOW BOAT.**  
**FORTUNE.** Thurs., Sat. & Dec. 26, 2.30. **JEALOUSY.**  
**HIPPODROME.** Wed., Thurs. & Sat., 2.30. "THAT'S A GOOD GIRL."  
**KINGSWAY.** Wed. & Sat., 2.30. "MRS. MOONLIGHT."

**LONDON PAVILION.** Tues. & Thurs., 2.30. **THIS YEAR OF GRACE.**  
**LYRIC, H'smith.** Wed., Sat., & 27, 28, 2.30. **A HUNDRED YEARS' OLD.**  
**PRINCES.** Wed., Sat. & 24, 27, 28, 2.30. **FUNNY FACE.**  
**ROYALTY.** Th., Sat., & Dec. 26, 28, 2.30. **BIRD IN HAND.**  
**ST. MARTIN'S.** Mon., Tues. & Fri., 2.40. "77 PARK LANE."  
**WYNDHAM'S.** Wed. & Sat., 2.30. "TO WHAT RED HELL."

### THEATRES.

**ALDWYCH.** (Gerrard 2304.) NIGHTLY, at 8.15  
Matinees, Wednesdays and Fridays, 2.30.

"PLUNDER." A New Farce by Ben Travers.

TOM WALLS, Mary Brough, and RALPH LYNN.

**COURT.** EVENINGS (except December 24), at 8.30. "THE CRITIC."  
Followed by "TWO GENTLEMEN OF SOHO."

MATS., THURS., SAT., & DEC. 26 & 28, at 2.30. (Sloane 5137.)

**DRURY LANE.** (Temple Bar 7171.) 8.15 precisely. Wed., Sat., 2.30

"SHOW BOAT." A New Musical Play.

XMAS MATINEES, DECEMBER 24, 26, 27, 28, and 29.

**DUKE OF YORK'S.** "SUCH MEN ARE DANGEROUS."

MATHESON LANG.

ISOBEL ELSOM.

EVGS. (except Dec. 24), 8.30. MATS., WED., SAT., and Dec. 27, 28, at 2.30.

**FORTUNE** (Temple Bar 7373.) MARY NEWCOMB in

**JEALOUSY.** By Eugene Walters

With Crane Wilbur.

NIGHTLY, at 8.40. MATS., THURS., SAT. & DEC. 26, at 2.30.

**HIPPODROME, London.** Evenings, at 8.15. Gerrard 0650.

MATINEES, WEDS., THURS. & SATS., at 2.30.

"THAT'S A GOOD GIRL."

JACK BUCHANAN.

ELSIE RANDOLPH.

**KINGSWAY.** Holborn 4032.

"MRS. MOONLIGHT." A New Play by Benn. W. Levy.

NIGHTLY, at 8.40. MATINEES, WED. & SAT., 2.30.

**LYRIC** Hammersmith. "A HUNDRED YEARS OLD."

Evgs. (except Dec. 24), 8.30. Mats., Wed., Sat., & Dec. 27 & 28, at 2.30.

Horace Hodges, Angela Baddeley, Nigel Playfair, Mabel Terry Lewis.

**PRINCES.** (Ger. 3400.) **FUNNY FACE.**

FRED ASTAIRE, ADELE ASTAIRE, and LESLIE HENSON.

Evenings at 8.15. Matinees, Wed., Sat., & Dec. 24, 27, 28, at 2.30.

**ROYALTY.** (Ger. 2690.) "BIRD IN HAND."

A Comedy by JOHN DRINKWATER.

EVGS. (except Dec. 24), at 8.30. MATS., THURS. & SAT. 2.30.

CHRISTMAS MATINEES, Dec. 26, 27, 28 & 29.

### THEATRES.

**ST. MARTIN'S.** (Gerr. 1243.) At 8.15. MATS., MON., TUES., FRI., 2.40.

"77 PARK LANE." By Walter Hackett.

HUGH WAKEFIELD and MARION LORNE.

**SAVOY.** Evenings, 8.30. Matinees, Monday, Wednesday & Thursday, 2.30.

"YOUNG WOODLEY."

FRANK LAWTON. KATHLEEN O'REGAN.

**WYNDHAM'S** (Reg. 3028.) EVGS., 8.30. MATS., WED. & SAT., 2.30.

"TO WHAT RED HELL."

SARA ALLGOOD, ROBERT HORTON, FREDERICK LEISTER.

### CINEMAS.

**EMPIRE,** Leicester Square. Continuous, Noon—11 p.m. Suns., 6.0—11 p.m.

JOHN GILBERT and JEANNE EAGELS in

"MAN, WOMAN AND SIN."

Also "BRINGING UP FATHER."

**REGAL.** Marble Arch. Paddington 9911.

Continuous, 2-11 p.m. Doors open 1.30.

Sundays, 6-11 p.m. Doors open 5.30. See and hear

AL JOLSON in "THE SINGING FOOL."

**STOLL PICTURE THEATRE.** Kingsway. (Holborn 3702.)

DAILY, 2 to 10.45. (SUNDAYS, New Programme, 6 to 10.30.)

December 17th, 18th & 19th. LILIAN HARVEY in "WIVES PREFERRED"; RICHARD ARLEN in Zane Grey's "UNDER THE TONTO RIM"; Stage: Hayden, Nevard & Wheldon.

December 20th, 21st & 22nd. JACKIE COOGAN in "BUTTONS"; IRENE RICH in "THE SILVER SLAVE"; Stage: Hayden, Nevard & Wheldon; Austel and Arthur.

### ART EXHIBITIONS.

**MAX BEERBOHM'S "GHOSTS."**

Exhibition of 120 New Caricatures, and  
Exhibition by VERGE SARRAT and MAK.  
LEICESTER GALLERIES, Leicester Square.



## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

## WHAT WE MAY BE COMING TO

NOTHING could well be more apposite than the publication of "Anthony Comstock," by Heywood Broun and Margaret Leech (Wishart, 15s.). It should be read and studied by Mr. James Douglas, Lord Beaverbrook, the Home Secretary, and Sir Chartres Biron, for here they will be able to learn about the methods of their great predecessor who made it his life work to see that nothing should be published which might harm "the little ones." Anthony Comstock, owing to a brush with Mr. Shaw over "Mrs. Warren's Profession," added the new word "comstockery" to our language, but it is improbable that many people in England know much about his life. Mr. Broun and Miss Leech have written a very amusing and, for our latter-day Comstocks, instructive biography. They are a little overelaborate in their irony and in their comments generally, as is the way with modern biographers, but their facts are so entertaining, and, I must repeat, instructive, that it is impossible to spoil them.

Comstock was born in 1844, the son of a farmer who lived appropriately at New Canaan in Connecticut, U.S.A. He was the essence and type of Puritanism. All his life from the time when he fought in the Civil War to the September day during the Great War when he died, he kept a diary of which his biographers rightly make great use. This diary reveals the familiar features of the pugnacious Puritan. There is the sense of sin, sin not only in Anthony Comstock, but even more in other people. There is the conviction that any kind of enjoyment except such as may be derived from prayer or other religious exercise (provided, of course, that the exercise be made as unenjoyable as possible) is bad. There is the belief, as persistent and passionate as Mr. Toobad's, that "the Devil has come among you!" indeed for Comstock the Devil played a much more important part in the universe and in the lives of men than God. And lastly, overwhelming all other convictions, there was the intense belief that "I, Anthony Comstock, know far better than other men what is good and what is bad; God has made it my duty to interfere as much as possible in other men's lives, to force them to think what I think they ought to think, to force them to be good, to put them in jail when they are—and they usually are—bad."

When Comstock returned from the Civil War, he became a grocer. He was quite a successful grocer, but he soon discovered that his real business in life was not dry-goods, but other people's sins. Irreligion, drink, and gambling all occupied his attention, but he soon specialized on sexual sin. He began his life work, his crusade against every kind of book, paper, pamphlet, advertisement, picture, or performance which in his opinion was "indecent" and corrupting because it appealed to the sexual passions. Like our own Comstocks, he knew exactly what was corrupting and had towards it the same attitude of violent indignation. The indignation and the obsession are held by some to point in his case to a Freudian complex, but the analysis of this kind of angry righteousness may be left to the psychologist. Our own Comstocks are mere amateurs beside this American original. Two years before he died, he boasted that he had prosecuted and obtained the conviction of over 3,600 persons, and had destroyed 160 tons of obscene literature. It was

through his efforts that the laws of the United States on the subject were made more severe; he was the founder and the most energetic member of the Society for the Suppression of Vice; he obtained an appointment as Special Agent of the Post Office, which gave him authority to enter premises and seize literature, &c. The hunt of pornography became his only occupation in life. He took immense pleasure in making the arrests himself, and he liked his victims to show fight. He endured broken ribs and a broken head and many other injuries in the good cause, and it was a satisfaction to him that he drove fifteen sinners, including a half-witted, elderly spinster, to suicide.

Comstock was quite indiscriminate in his quarry, and he seems to have held the most catholic views with regard to obscenity. It is probable that a large proportion of the literature, &c., which he destroyed was in fact the kind of dreary pornography which you can see displayed to-day in many London shopwindows. But he also made it his business to suppress Boccaccio and Mr. Bernard Shaw, a scientific treatise on the propagation of marsupials by a clergyman called Bradford, and the works of Mr. Havelock Ellis. Any picture in which the amount of clothing did not satisfy the Comstock standard came under his ban. His doctrines on the subject are interesting, and may be found useful by Sir W. Joynson-Hicks, Sir Chartres Biron, and other magistrates who may in the future be called upon to protect our purity. The reason for suppressing such works as those named above was that indecent literature "made rakes and libertines in society—skeletons in many a household. The family is polluted, home desecrated, and each generation born into the world is more and more cursed by the inherited weakness, the harvest of this seed-sowing of the Evil one." The following was his reason for suppressing all works of art in which the female form was not fully clothed:—

"Anything which tends to destroy the dignity of womanhood or to display the female form in an irreverent manner is immoral. No one reveres the female form more than I do. In my opinion there is nothing else in the world so beautiful as the form of a beautiful maiden woman—nothing. But the place for a woman's body to be—denuded—is in the privacy of her own apartments with the blinds down."

I wish I had space to deal with another side of this book, the fascinating light which it throws upon American society in the seventies. The story of Comstock's prosecution of the two lady brokers, Victoria Woodhull and Tennessee Claflin, is amazing. The ladies for some reason thought it their duty to inform the world that the eminently respectable Rev. Henry Ward Beecher had relations with the wife of a gentleman called Tilton. Why this should have worried them is not clear, for they preached the doctrines of free love, and Mrs. Woodhull seems to have had a second husband, during Mr. Woodhull's lifetime, called Colonel Blood. However, at a convention of the National Association of Spiritualists, she was "seized with an overwhelming gust of inspiration" and told the story of Beecher and Mrs. Tilton "in a rhapsody of indignant eloquence." How this led to her prosecution by Comstock for publishing indecent literature must be read in his biography.

LEONARD WOOLF.

## REVIEWS

## NEW NOVELS

- As Far as Jane's Grandmother's.** By EDITH OLIVIER. (Secker. 7s. 6d.)
- The Devil's Bridge.** By M. A. ALDANOV. Translated from the Russian by A. E. CHAMOT. (Knopf. 7s. 6d.)
- The Unforgiven.** By P. N. KRASSNOFF. Translated from the German by OLGA VITALI and VERA BROOKE. (Allen & Unwin. 12s. 6d.)
- The Robber Band.** By LEONHARD FRANK. Translated from the German by CYRUS BROOKS. (Davies. 7s. 6d.)
- Belinda.** By HILAIRE BELLOC. (Constable. 6s.)
- The Woburn Books: The Man Who Missed the 'Bus.** By STELLA BENSON. **The Old Dovecote.** By DAVID GARNETT. **The Apple Disdained.** By R. H. MOTTRAM. (Elkin Mathews. 6s. each.)
- The Golden Arrow.** By MARY WEBB. With an Introduction by G. K. CHESTERTON. (Cape. 5s.)
- The Best Short Stories of 1928. American.** Edited by EDWARD O'BRIEN. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)
- Hill Country.** By RAMSEY BENSON. (Hodder & Stoughton. 7s. 6d.)
- The Ladder of Folly.** By MURIEL HINE. (The Bodley Head. 7s. 6d.)

SOME people have an insatiable appetite for novels. They can read a novel a day; two novels a day; three novels a day. The young lady behind the counter in any circulating library will confirm the truth of this statement. She knows it all too well; and all too well she knows the responsibility which subscribers will seek to lay upon her shoulders. "Now can you recommend me," they will say with an air of taking her into their confidence, "a really good book?" By a really good book they mean a really good novel; and by a really good novel they mean a novel which will enable them to forget, for an hour or two, their personal worries or their personal boredom. The readers of novels thus fall automatically into two classes: those who read a novel because it provides a distraction, and those who read a novel because it represents a specialized form of literature; the second class being in the minority. The writers of novels also fall automatically into two classes: those who write a novel because it will distract, and consequently sell; and those who write a novel because they wish to express something of themselves in that particular specialized form of literature; the second class being again in the minority. Under these two headings, readers and writers of novels can therefore be grouped, demand and supply being, on the whole, adequately balanced. One must also allow for a sort of No-man's Land in the middle.

The collection of novels which I have at present before me divides itself very conveniently into these two classes. The first nine in my list are books written, in varying degrees, with a serious intention, by people who have a certain respect for their art; the remaining three are (consciously or unconsciously) designed for the subscriber who goes to the young lady behind the counter for advice. For reasons which I hope have been made sufficiently, though not explicitly, clear, I seldom enjoy reading a novel. But I did enjoy "As Far as Jane's Grandmother's." It is an intelligent book; the author has not only taken a pleasure in telling her story for the sake of a story—no small quality in the novelist—but she has also conveyed the impression of knowing life all round her pronouncements, so that they do not echo as mere aphorisms in a void. As in all really satisfactory fiction, the few comments which Edith Olivier chooses to make, come, not as a surprise, but with an inevitability which flatters the reader into a sense that he had already thought of them for himself. Quotation is impossible, since the whole cumulative weight of the book is needed to give any separate passage its due, and to detach any fragment from so satisfactory a whole would be to do it less than justice; but to those who care for fiction as an art, I would recommend that they put this novel, as I have done, first upon their list.

"The Devil's Bridge" is by a Russian, M. A. Aldanov, and is the second volume of a historical trilogy of which "The Ninth Thermidor" was the first. This fact may partially account for the author's very characteristic contempt for the neatly rounded-off story; though I fancy that

national temperament and national tradition have more to do with it. For this novel has none of the neat virtuosity of "The Bridge of San Luis Rey"—the title invites comparison. It is untidy in design, as Russian novels are apt to be, though firm enough in its detail; but by its very untidiness, which is certainly due to no feebleness of grasp on the part of the author, it suggests the untidiness and uncertainty of life in a way that mere virtuosity can never do. "Where is Kolya Petrov," reflects Staal, the hero, "where is Zorich, where is Voronstov? Why, at the time it seemed that they were closely connected with my life. They were, and they are no more. All, all is chance. So it may be that to-morrow a chance bullet will kill me in the Devil's Hole. Nastenka will cry; then she will love another. . . . Well, let her." Nastenka will cry; then she will love another; and so life goes on. The background is first the Court of St. Petersburg under Catherine the Great—"without taking it off, Marie Savvishna proceeded to put another gold pin, smeared with fresh honey, into the elegant filigree locket that Catherine wore round the neck, as a trap for fleas"—then the campaign of Suvarov against Napoleon in Italy and in the Alps. This book pleases me better than "The Unforgiven," by General Krassnoff, which is more pretentious but less vital, in spite of the political passions with which it is concerned. General Krassnoff is, of course, the author of "From the Double Eagle to the Red Flag"; his new novel deals with the Revolution. It is interesting enough from the point of view of history and propaganda; but considered purely as a novel it leaves me unmoved. A few admirers tried to pretend that the "Double Eagle" challenged comparison with "War and Peace"; for my own part, I am convinced that General Krassnoff is anything but a great novelist.

"The Robber Band" is not a book for readers of squeamish taste, but it is none the worse for that. Leonhard Frank, indeed, is one of the more interesting of modern German authors, and I sincerely hope that his very beautiful story, "Karl und Anna," may also be translated into English and published in this country. It cannot be an easy task for publishers to discover the best work of a foreign country, and Messrs. Peter Davies are much to be congratulated upon their choice of Leonhard Frank. "The Robber Band," Frank's first novel, appeared just before the outbreak of war; it deals with the rebellion of working boys in Würzburg against the sordidity and monotony of daily life. It should certainly be read by those who take an interest in German fiction of to-day.

"Belinda," by Hilaire Belloc, is probably familiar already to a large number of readers of "Life and Letters." It is, frankly, a joke; a pastiche of the Victorian novel. I cannot say that I find it very amusing, and I regret that Mr. Belloc's talents should not have been more worthily employed. Still, it is nicely produced and many people will doubtless find it convenient at this season as a substitute for that abomination, the Christmas card.

The same may be said of the Woburn Books, which, in a limited edition, signed by the authors, contain one or more short stories each. The most entertaining of the three which are included on my list (the series also numbers contributions by D. H. Lawrence, G. K. Chesterton, T. F. Powys, Sheila Kaye-Smith, and Martin Armstrong) is, I think, Miss Stella Benson's. "The Man Who Missed the 'Bus" is a queer, wry, distressing little story. Everything that Miss Benson writes has merit; it has a twist always, and a tang. Mr. Garnett's contribution to the series savours rather too much of the notebook; it is as though Messrs. Elkin Mathews had written to him, and he had hurriedly looked up the best he could do for them. Mr. Mottram's story seems to me altogether too deliberate to be pleasing. With all due respect to Mr. Arnold Bennett, his advocate, who recently referred to him as one of "the two real British geniuses of the new age," I have yet to be convinced of Mr. Mottram's genius and originality. But a set of these booklets, or even a selection from them, would make an easy and admirable Christmas present.

This disposes of the books which have a right to be considered as literature. Four remain, and one of them, "The Golden Arrow," by Mary Webb, must be placed in No-man's Land. I am unable to share either Mr. Baldwin's or Mr.

## MR. MURRAY'S NEW BOOKS

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### NEW NOVELS

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### THE HOUSE By EDITH AYRTON ZANGWILL

"The story is unusual, well planned, and well worth reading, for its style is good and its characters are true to life."—*Church of England Newspaper*.  
7s. 6d. net.

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, LONDON, W.1



Chesterton's enthusiasm for the works of Mary Webb; though I must admit that "The Golden Arrow" is an improvement upon "Precious Bane." To write books about rustics is evidently a difficult matter, requiring either the transmuting genius of a Hardy or the violent objectivity of a Knut Hamsun; nothing else will do. Sentimentality, country speech (or the parody of it), and the suggestion of the mystical sympathy of Nature will not suffice as substitutes. Nor will sincerity; for surely Mary Webb was sincere enough in her intention. It is this very sincerity which makes one hesitate before the unkindness of destructive remarks. But when Mr. Chesterton calls Mary Webb "a writer of genius," and calls her books "the prose poems of a Shropshire Lass," setting them side by side with the poems of Mr. A. E. Housman, then really one does feel moved to protest. What has happened to Mr. Baldwin's and Mr. Chesterton's sense of proportion?

The next two books are American, "The Best Short Stories of 1928" and "Hill Country." Could not the editor of the short stories have done better for us? His selection includes nothing from the ATLANTIC MONTHLY, and only one story from HARPER'S. I speak in comparative ignorance, but I should have thought that those two publications could have helped to produce something more deserving of the word "best." "Hill Country" is a story of the Middle West. It won, apparently, the 7,500 dollar Stokes-Forum-Magazine prize, but it is exceedingly dull—mostly about Swedish settlers who were altogether too clean and upright to live. One can almost sympathize with the dislike of their American neighbours for them.

"The Ladder of Folly," by Muriel Hine, should do well on the bookstalls. When we are presented with "the firm, spare lines of the body in the thin, belted shirt," of Luke Caborne from Harvard, who in the first five pages rescues "the fragile grace" of Ann Massingby from the incoming tide, we know what to expect.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST.

### MONEY WITHOUT TEARS

**The Money Game, and How to Play It.** By NORMAN ANGELL.  
(Dent. 12s. 6d.)

HERE is a great and gratifying illusion; for no less than half of this fat book turns out to be no book at all, but a set of playing-cards and of miniature banknotes neatly packed into the cover. It is Mr. Angell's conviction that if we are to avoid a repetition of the follies and blunders of the last ten years, the ordinary citizen must be taught to think straight about economic problems in general and Money in particular; and that the elements of these subjects can be better imparted by visible and practical demonstration than by the written word. This game is an attempt, the result of long experimenting, to devise such a new and agreeable vehicle of economic instruction.

I have not yet had an opportunity of playing the game; but I take it from hearsay and from the numerous children and grown-ups whose testimony is quoted by Mr. Angell that it is a very agreeable and exciting game. I will not describe it beyond saying that it belongs to the order of games, typified by Happy Families, which consists in the building up of complete sets of cards by means of barter or other modes of acquisition; and that attached to the game there is a story about a sailor who arrived with some gold on a civilized but moneyless island, and set up as a banker and general entrepreneur. The game would appear to foster facility in mental arithmetic and rapid judgment in the striking of bargains—Mr. Angell assures us that it will not foster the acquisitive tendencies. Perhaps it would be priggish to fear that it may, for nothing could be more acquisitive than Snap or Beggar-my-neighbour, which would not (I hope) be ruled out even in a Communist nursery. Yet is there not something to be said for venting the acquisitive tendencies in these time-honoured pastimes, which no one can suppose to have any bearing on the real world, and for starting the study of human society through the more disinterested medium of a suitable history-book? I leave the question to the child-psychologists, my own experience being confined to the teaching of semi-adults who are already hardened in sin.

But granted that the game is a good and a harmless one, how far is Mr. Angell right in claiming that it teaches the elementary truths about money, and teaches them better than they could be taught in books? In judging of these claims, the sophisticated reader will find, I think, that he has to be on his guard against the temptation to press the analogies between the game and real life too far. For instance, as Mr. Angell warns us, "the sailor is not only a banker, he is an entrepreneur, and the rules governing his conduct are a compromise between those appropriate respectively to the two persons. Thus, he is allowed to cash his notes in finished goods—which bankers are only allowed to do in a very indirect sense—but he is not allowed to count unfinished goods as worth anything, which any ordinary entrepreneur is." Again, in the third variant of the game, which is designed to illustrate the mutual indebtedness of customer and banker, it has not been found possible to take account of the essential fact that the banker's debt is payable on demand, while the borrower's is generally not. All this means that the child who gains his first knowledge of money and banking from the game will have not only to learn a good deal more from books, but also to *unlearn* a certain amount. Moreover, I doubt if there is a real analogy, though Mr. Angell most amusingly tries to construct one, between teaching a game by means of playing the game itself and teaching a science by means of a game—in the one case the learning of the game is the object of playing the game, and in the other case it is not! But Mr. Angell does not, of course, really deny the need for books; and he does, I think, make out his contention that the games do teach effectively the simplest truths of all—that money is not wealth, and that there ought to be some relation between the creation of money and the creation of wealth. And we can agree that the world would probably go better if even this much knowledge were a firmer part of the mental equipment of the average citizen. So let the makers of books applaud Mr. Angell's ingenuity, and welcome him as an ally!

D. H. ROBERTSON.

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•

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## TRENCH HISTORY

**Ten Years Ago.** By R. H. MOTTRAM. (Chatto & Windus. 5s.)  
**Undertones of War.** By EDMUND BLUNDEN. (Cobden-Sanderson. 10s. 6d.)

Nor having read "The Spanish Farm Trilogy," I cannot decide whether "Ten Years Ago," described as a "pendant," is in keeping with the chain. I can only say that moralistic generalizations and Flanders Poppy sentiment so blur whatever sharp memories of the war Mr. Mottram may have had (and may have recorded in the trilogy) that this book might as well have been written by someone who had never been in the B.E.F. at all. Mr. Mottram's command of literary technique is all against him. When, for instance, he wants to emphasize the extraordinary nightmarish cloud of superstition that hung over trench life he uses a clever short-story plot entirely unsuitable to the material. He gives us a "Devil's Own Phantom Ambulance" (engine by Poe, with Marion Crawford chassis) spreading spooky death along the pavé road; or a haunted iron garden-chair (by O. Henry out of M. R. James). All wrong somehow. Though it is true that bad, unnatural, inexplicable things did happen because of, or for the benefit of, this ever-present superstition, they never happened neatly enough for that sort of short story. (This is where Barbusse went wrong in "Le Feu"). They were uncertain, shifting, blood-freezing things like the bobbing shadows which the sentry saw just beyond the wire a little before stand-to. They were not meant for Mr. Mottram to write up. No, it is not at all a good book. When one would like to be told, or reminded, exactly what it felt like to have, say, a five-nine bracketing down one's trench five yards short and five yards over; or to see a bomb rolling down the steps of a dug-out as one sat playing nap; or anything of that sort—he gives us a highly coloured view of what it must have felt like inside the head of an American officer (from Kipling County in an unlocated State) when that head was blown off by a shell. No, I cannot feel very matey towards Mr. Mottram. Our battalion M.O. once described a brother-officer to me as "Sort of chap who was always bragging 'When I was up in the Salient,' until I couldn't stand it and asked, 'Whose Salient?'" That is a question I feel like putting now.

Any two pages of Edmund Blunden's "Undertones of War" (though occasional quaint Lamb-and-mint-saucinesses of style remind us that Mr. Blunden too is not helped in his task by his mastery of traditional literary technique) are worth the whole 180 of "Ten Years Ago." They have the real stuff in them. Blunden is about the first man I have read who has realized that the problem of writing about trench-warfare lies in the "peculiar difficulty of selecting the sights, faces, words, incidents which characterized the times," and that the solution is "to collect them in their original form of incoherence." He was with a New Army battalion of the Royal Sussex from early summer of 1916 (the Givenchy sector) to New Year, 1918 (Peronne way). In between was Ypres, Thiepval, and so on. Now, it was at least a fifty-to-one chance against a platoon commander in a good fighting battalion surviving eighteen months of that, so the autobiographical part is most interesting as giving the typical fluctuations of the morale-curve up to and beyond the usual three months' limit. After about nine months this curve slowly falls, its fluctuations getting flatter and flatter, then steadies to a dull level which may be popularly interpreted as utter cowardice or utter fearlessness, but is really a sort of death. It is a condition when the blood is so full of the dope which constant danger and constant noise have made some ductless gland or other pump compensatingly into it, that a man goes about his business quite dead in spirit, three parts mad, defeatist, a depressing influence on his company, yet more or less efficient and never content unless he is right up in the front line where more noise and more danger and more horror will keep the gland still active until the whole physical machine conks out in "shell-shock." This doped condition was reached, it seems, in about the fifteenth month, unless some unusually bad show brought

it on earlier. And some ten years elapse before the blood is running fairly clean again.

Blunden, having been thus dead, as I read the story, writes like Lazarus; of graves well known to other Lazaruses. Of Coldstream Lane by the Brickstacks and its evil smell (in spite of Mr. Mottram's suggestion, "The Salient" was not the only place where wounded men crawling back were drowned by the score). Of Schwaben Redoubt, the limit of horror. Of Red Dragon Crater at Givenchy (Blair of the 2nd Royal Welch was buried there up to his neck, when the whole of B company was blown up one early morning. The Germans sniped at him all day, and at night our chaps exhumed him. He was badly wounded, but he was back with the battalion a few months later.) Of the Tunnels in the Hindenburg Line and their corpses. Of Anthuille:—

"Of the dead, one was conspicuous. He was a Scottish soldier, and was kneeling, facing east, so that one could scarcely credit death in him; he was seen at some little distance from the usual tracks, and no one had much time in Thiepval just then for sight seeing or burying. Death could not kneel so, I thought, and approaching I ascertained with a sudden shrivelling of spirit that Death could and did."

My only complaint against this very worth while book is that Blunden is too much of a gentleman. Loyalty keeps him from heaping the shames on the horrors. Almost everyone he mentions is more or less of a good fellow, or a stout fellow at least; the troops are seen in massacre, but never in stampede with our own machine-guns rallying them; one single self-inflicted wound is exhibited, but no suicides or courts-martial for cowardice; the flirtatious bootshop belle of Béthune is recalled, but not the long, horrible queue at the Red Lamp only just round the corner. But then, as he notes when discussing a corporal's oaths, "this book is for publication."

ROBERT GRAVES.

## OBSERVATION AND WIT

**Worlds Within Worlds.** By STELLA BENSON. (Macmillan. 8s. 6d.)

MISS STELLA BENSON may go on being impudent about the world till the very crust of the earth winces, but the abiding impression she makes is still Alician, an impression of someone who is naive and sensitive and yet matter of fact, with a thimble in her pocket.

Several virtues go to make the stories and sketches of this much-travelled Alice, who will not politely hold her tongue, worth reading. Miss Benson's colours are never either toned up or toned down by her own preconceptions of what she sees, nor by consciousness of what her reader expects her to see. The stuff of her writings is never prepared for importation into England from the East. Miss Benson plucks something robust and simple out of Manchu life—no question of its genuineness. She does not admire what she ought to admire: her amusing description of a Chinese play is followed by a Johnsonianly uncompromising condemnation of Chinese art and drama. "I believe that the Chinese are one of the most prosaic and unoriginal peoples in the world to-day and have the least to teach us." Even in her reading of the mind of small Li-Sing at the Christmas Party she does not abandon her unsentimental estimate of the Chinese, and while no Englishwoman can ever know what does go on in the mind of a small Chinese boy, Miss Benson's guess sounds like the best yet made. She always guesses shrewdly and she notices gestures and shapes in an abnormally sharp and convincing way. "The Cigarette," a fascinating story first published in *THE NATION*, tells itself in a sequence of gestures, ending with the wrinkling of the baby's nose above "the crater of the unsuspected volcano." (For a lighted cigarette was smouldering in the fastnesses of cotton wadding that clothed its Korean parent.) People and animals explain themselves to her by their movements, the ant with its "light, sophisticated antennæ, usually so nimbly articulate, so ready with explanations of the universe," "the Japanese in their natural kimonos, the muscular movement of their little virile figures animating the indolent shapes of their garments."





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\* \* \*

*The rest is silence—and*

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The dancing, jerking, lumbering life which Miss Benson sees so freshly, she describes with humour, which if sometimes a little facile is at least unforced. At times she shows that rare quality, wit, chiefly in the quickness and neatness of her phrases—"the piercing Esperanto used by babies of all nationalities," "this little creased queer veil, our face." She knows when to stop and when to stop short, and belongs to the modern group of women writers, of whom Katherine Mansfield is the greatest and whose literary creed is Induction. The women novelists of the nineteenth century wrote deductively in a pseudo-masculine way. The beauty of Inductive Literature is that, as the conclusion and excuse of any piece of writing come last, they may very easily be omitted.

### A PROBLEM OF IDENTITY

**Anastasia: The Survivor of Ekaterinburg.** By H. VON RATHLEF-KEILMANN. Translated from the German by F. S. FLINT. (Putnam. 21s.)

THE natural scepticism of present-day humanity condemns this book to be approached by almost every reader in a spirit of disbelief. The extraordinary will never be credited if an easy alternative argument can dispose of it. Even in fiction, impostors are as common as miraculous escapes, and in life far more so, especially where royalty is concerned. After the French Revolution quite a number of alleged Dauphins tried their luck, relying for success on the absence of all facts and evidence concerning the boy's death. But the Russian revolutionaries were more direct and more inclusive in their sentence. There was no mystery, on the face of it, when the Tsar and his family were shot. The story of the survival of the youngest daughter, rescued, with a spark of life left in her, by a peasant, to be taken to Roumania in his farm-cart appears at the first glance a good film scenario and no more. The story is certainly the weakest factor of the present argument. One witness reports two Grand Duchesses in the wagon, on which the author naively comments: "He may well have mistaken one of the peasant women for a Grand Duchess." Of course. But why did he not mistake the Grand Duchess for a peasant woman?

Yet the fact remains that anyone who dislikes the extraordinary had better look no further than the photographs, which prove nothing. The extraordinary, in some form, cannot be avoided, since, if the claimant is not the Tsar's daughter, there is no rational explanation of how she came by certain recollections of events and people. She is not an adventuress, but a chronic tubercular invalid, saved from an attempt at drowning, confined for two years in a mental asylum before being cared for in a hospital by more friendly hands. Mrs. Harriet von Rathlef-Keilmann, who nursed the invalid and worked continuously to establish her identity, has collected in this volume all the evidence, based on her own observations supported by the testimony of others, including members of the Russian Royal Family who recognized the woman as Anastasia. That the invalid speaks no Russian (though she understands it) is a stumbling block; this, and the other gaps and haltings in her story are put down to a memory seriously impaired. On the other hand, her recollections, carefully collected by the author, are of intimate trivial affairs of the Royal Family which no outsider is likely to have known. Some are unsubstantiated, but a number have been checked. Certain physical proofs of her identity are also stressed: for example, a scarred finger, once crushed in a carriage door.

On the whole, Mrs. von Rathlef-Keilmann's evidence makes it easier to accept than to refute the arguments. But it must be remembered that she is herself convinced, and although she claims to have presented every counter-argument, it is quite possible that subconsciously her conviction should have influenced her trend. It would be foolish to pronounce dogmatically either way, on the strength—or weakness—of this volume. The political consequences are in any case negligible, but the question is intriguing; for there is no doubt that the invalid believes herself to be the Princess Anastasia. If she is under a delusion, what can have put it, along with so much corroborative detail, into her vagrant and unsteady mind?

### DAYS OF FEAR

**Days of Fear.** By FRANK GALLAGHER. (Murray. 5s.)

WHEN I was told by whom this journal was being published, I said, "Murray!—John Murray—Sir John—Why, he suspects even me. . . ." But then remembering that his having been the house that sponsored Byron, who died in the fight for a nation's freedom, I felt it fitting it should make known this record of brave men, who went for the same cause into the very Valley of the Shadow of Death. A beautiful, heart-rending book.

The publisher's note on the cover says—"It is a record of spiritual strength, of reckless suffering, and of frank cowardice. The honest, candid, and truthful sensations of a mind under the sustained physical suffering of a Hunger Strike in Mountjoy Jail, Dublin, in 1920. The prisoners had pledged themselves 'to the honour of Ireland and the lives of our comrades not to eat food nor drink anything except water until all have been given prisoner-of-war treatment or are released.'" And Field-Marshal Lord French, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, had pledged himself to no concessions.

Frank Gallagher gives the diary day after day: Easter Monday, April 5th, to Thursday, April 15th.

On that first day:—

"there is a queer happiness in me. If it were not so quiet in the cell and in the whole jail I would sing and call out in sheer gaiety of spirit. The fight is on, the fight that can have but one ending—triumph and freedom, something done for liberty and the rights of all men. The porridge tasted sweet this morning. Perhaps it knew its mission, that it will have to keep me alive until we have won. 'This is the last time you will be washed by me,' I said to the enamel plate, though dear knows there was not much need to wash it at all. 'This is the last time,' I said to the bone, translucent spoon, as I licked the last flick of creaminess from it.'" And later, "We trooped back to our cells joking, jubilant, and each to himself—a little uneasy."

But on the next day:—

"to-night my head aches. The hardest thing of all to bear is that there are no meal hours. Jail life hinges on the three meals, and now there is no division of the day, no beginning and no end—the head aches, the body is damp and weak, even sleep has gone."

Then on the Wednesday:—

"Not many in the exercise ring this morning—late last night young Mitchell fainted in his cell. They raced Mitchell over to the hospital and called three doctors. We walked silently for a little while. I was thinking of young Mitchell as he fainted."

Then a new Monday:—

"I am not ready to die for earth or for a people. Ireland is something else—when the essential things are clear, death has nothing but a beautiful meaning. But—I would prefer to die in the daytime. It is no harm to have a preference. It would be so horrible at night."

"Tuesday 13th.—I am not mad, they are trying to make me mad. They are watching me, they have red eyes like coals. They are waiting till I sleep so that they can steal in and take my mug of water away. Beautiful water with a thousand tastes!—I must fight these mad thoughts when they come."

"This is the darkest night yet. Death alone could find his way in here now.—Yes—he is there again to-night—I feel him coming towards me, not walking but as it were, floating."

"Well, Death, how goes it? Better with me than with you." "You are judging by men's bodies, Death. It is by their souls these men are living." "But I am concerned only with the body." "In that struggle you always win?" "I always win, for that struggle always kills. Death is the robbing from man of his great desire." "But if a man's great desire be unity with God, what then?" "Then he does not struggle. His senses are extinguished one by one, and I cannot rob him of his great desire. That which he yearns for is given him in death."

"The Doctors told the Government that to-night some of us would be dead."

And outside the jail?

It happened that on Tuesday morning, the 13th, arriving from London, I wrote:—

"At Kingstown I bought the papers and the news of the Hunger Strike turned me sick. A General Strike on behalf of the prisoners ordered. The Gresham staff are to leave at 10 a.m. and the hotel is to be shut. Excitement in the streets and everywhere. 'Stop-Press' editions, giving news of the prisoners on hunger strike and the ordered strike outside. I expected to be turned out, but the Gresham will still keep me. I say I think the one-day strike may make

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*I believe that the secret of Christmas happiness lies in the knowledge that we have done all we could to assist those less fortunate than ourselves.*

*Thousands of blind people in this country are poverty-stricken and without employment.*

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the Government give in, but the housemaid is doubtful, says. "The military are very cruel."

"14th.—The streets crowded, all shops shut, the people without any look of enjoyment.

"This morning the housemaid says, 'No deaths, but all are sinking.' It is terrible. I had prayed so hard last night for them and awoke to find myself praying to America."

Later, "I saw on the posters 'Prisoners dying.' A constant, quiet tramping of feet on the pavement, all going towards Mountjoy. No voices except the newsboys now and again 'Stop-Press,' and the buzzing of the aeroplanes.

"But now 'Stop Press' says the Lord Mayor has been asked to go to the Viceregal Lodge! Then, later, the Hotel Manager, delighted, told me the prisoners had been released. Such a mercy! I met Douglas Hyde and his daughter bicycling back from Mountjoy where they had been with the watching crowd. A man had called out to them in Irish that the Government had given in. Then Susan Mitchell, radiant, and we rejoiced together. It has been a terrible strain all day."

And now in reading this book it is almost as great a relief to come to its last pages: "Midnight, April 14th:—

"The taxi driver would not take his fare. He said he would be proud all his life that he had driven one of us. . ."

And then:—

"As long as I do not open my eyes I can have my dream—it must be real—I hear the birds again—yes—thrush, I will look now—just now, give me a minute more and I'll look—a square window, green trees, a blue, blue sky and such sweet birds. It is true—I want to sing too."

A. GREGORY.

### MODERN ARCHITECTURE

**Modern European Buildings.** First Series. By F. R. YERBURY. (Gollancz. 30s.)

THIS book contains 144 pages of plates and only two pages of text. More information as to scale, material, &c., would have been welcome, but Mr. Yerbury is to be congratulated on cutting the cackle. Another excellent and all too rare point is the inclusion of plans. The book contains photographs of bridges, stadia, churches, schools, factories, theatres, railway stations, exhibition buildings, and office buildings both public and commercial. Private houses are not included. Mr. Yerbury's photographs are admirable, but the mendacity of the camera has become proverbial, and the best buildings are not always those that photograph best. The Cologne Exhibition buildings are rather better than the photographs suggest, the Copenhagen police courts are much smaller, and the Grundtvigs church is less startling. The more utilitarian architecture is much the best. The designers find a spontaneous form for locks, stations, and factories. Churches and theatres demand higher imagination than the architects possess, and incidentally oppress him with traditional memories. The twentieth century is rich in engineers and scientists, poor in dramatists and saints. The best designs are Herr Mendelssohn's hat-factory and exhibition pavilion; and, in a modest way, the London Underground station by Messrs. Adams, Holden and Pearson. The best living architect, Le Corbusier, is not represented, no doubt because most of his work has been in private houses. Most modern architecture is either too grim or too frivolous. A public library, for instance, should resemble neither a factory nor a theatrical decor. Very few architects avoid falling into one of these extremes. Dignity is the first quality required in most buildings, but it is the last quality attained. And those who seek it in pastiche find it even less often than the revolutionaries. Probably it is the clients even more than the architects who are responsible for architecture being more cowardly in England than on the Continent. Adelaide House, and the new Carreras building are spoiled by their Egyptian fancy-dress. But everywhere there is a tendency to a trivial and operatic sort of prettiness. Rococo served with a Cubist sauce is the commonest type of ornament. It is to be seen at its worst on the handsome skeleton of the new Horticultural Hall. But there is a little good architecture to-day, and there might be more. The new Regent Street style cannot last much longer. And Mr. Yerbury's book provides an excellent anthology, even if, to a strict taste, it provides more horrid warnings than commendable models.

### ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE

THIS is the period of the publishing season when novels and biographies cease to appear and their place is taken by "serious" works. Admirers of Professor Gilbert Murray's translations of Greek plays will welcome "The Oresteia" (Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.), which now includes for the first time in one volume the translation of the three great tragedies of Æschylus.

"Europe: A History of Ten Years," by Raymond Buell (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.), is a useful history of Europe since the war, written by an American, with the help of the staff of the American Foreign Policy Association. Another book, dealing partly with history and partly with current political questions directly rising out of that history, written by an American is "The Far East," by Payson J. Treat (Harper, 16s.). "Life Under the Soviets," by Alexander Wicksteed (Bodley Head, 6s.), has an introduction by Mrs. Sidney Webb; Mr. Wicksteed, as she says, "has had an incomparable opportunity of watching" life under the Soviets "for the better part of a decade . . . as a normal inhabitant and citizen of Moscow, unconcerned with politics."

"Wanderings in Wild Australia," by Sir Baldwin Spencer (Macmillan, 2 vols., 42s.), is a work of great interest and importance to anthropologists.

"Rabindranath Tagore: Letters to a Friend" (Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.) contains letters written by Tagore to Mr. C. F. Andrews and two introductory essays on the Bengal Renaissance and the personality of Tagore by Mr. Andrews.

### NEW GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

#### H.M.V. RECORDS

UNDOUBTEDLY the best H.M.V. record this month is orchestral, Brahms's Symphony, No. 1, in C minor, played by the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra conducted by Stokowski (Five 12-in. records. D1499-1503. 6s. 6d. each). This orchestra is so good that we look forward eagerly to its performance of this work. At first we were a little disappointed. The first and second movements are beautifully played, but there was nothing to equal the technique of the "Scheherazade" records. In the third movement, however, and in the *allegro* of the last movement the brilliance is unmistakable. The symphony was recently recorded, played by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Weingartner. Those were good records, but these are better. The Philadelphia Orchestra also play the "Danse Orientale" of Glazounov and Ippolitov-Ivanov's "March of the Caucasian Chief" (E521. 4s. 6d.), romantic music which yet gives one a taste of their quality. The London Symphony Orchestra under Mr. Coates play Czar Sultan Suite No. 3 (12-in. record. D1491. 6s. 6d.), in which Rimsky-Korsakov writes music reminiscent of his "Scheherazade." Finally, Quilter's "Children's Overture," which is ingeniously woven from Nursery Rhymes, is played by the New Light Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Dr. Malcolm Sargent (Two 10-in. records. B2860-1. 3s. each).

An exceptionally beautiful vocal record which everyone should hear is "Che farò senza Euridice," from Gluck's "Orfeo ed Euridice," sung by Maria Olczewska, contralto (12-in. record. D1490. 6s. 6d.). The music, the singer, and the recording combine here to produce something entirely delightful. On the other side, Madame Olczewska sings Handel's "Ombra mai fu," the air of which is so often played as Handel's Largo. Galli-Curci, soprano, sings "Abide with me" and "Lead, Kingly Light" (10-in. record. DA864. 6s.), but this famous singer is out of her element in hymns, and seems to feel it. Mr. McCormack is quite in his element in "Just for to-day" and "The Holy Child" (DA929. 6s.).

Rachmaninoff plays his own famous Prelude and Mendelssohn's "Bees' Wedding" very well as piano solos (DA996. 6s.), and many people will like the two cheerful pieces "Copak" of Moussorgsky and Pizzicato Movement of Delibes, played by Mark Hambourg (B2818. 3s.). Heifetz shows his skill as a violinist in "Estrellita" and Drigo's "Valse Nuetto" (DA984. 6s.).

John Barrymore is a very stagey Shakespearian actor. The staginess is accentuated when you only hear his voice as in a record in which he recites the famous "Hamlet" soliloquy "Now I am alone," and Gloucester's soliloquy in Act III., Scene 2, of "Henry VI." (DB1177. 8s. 6d.).

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## FINANCIAL SECTION

## THE WEEK IN THE CITY

## MORALS OF THE FORD ISSUE—NEW YORK—NEW GREEK LOAN

THE success of the Ford Motor Company in getting its issue of 2,800,000 ordinary shares of £1 many times oversubscribed was, perhaps, the most remarkable event in the capital market this year. The King's illness, the New York reaction, the congested state of the new issue market, were all telling against success. The prospectus gave no estimates of profits, and no figures of manufacturing costs. It stated that contracts had been made for the sale of the maximum output of the Manchester factories in 1929—i.e., 40,000 model "A" Ford cars—and it estimated that a further 80,000 vehicles should be sold during 1929 from the controlled factories in Europe, together with 30,000 Fordson tractors manufactured in Cork. Further than 1929 it did not look, except to state that the Dagenham factory would have a capacity of 200,000 vehicles per annum when completed. The statement of profits earned by the European Ford companies meant nothing, because they were earned from an obsolescent car, the production of which was suspended in the last five months of 1927. And the new Ford car is comparatively unknown in England. Yet such was the respect for Mr. Ford's organizing and engineering ability (not to mention the sporting recognition of his "come-back") that the issue succeeded where any other industrial speculation would have failed. We understand that many applications for shares came from Ireland, where Mr. Ford is regarded as a patron saint, and from the United States whose people have never before had the chance of becoming Mr. Ford's partners.

We commend the Ford prospectus as a model to promoters of industrial companies. Being a speculative enterprise it rightly sought to finance its business by the issue only of ordinary shares. If it had borne the stamp of the usual speculative issue this year it would have issued preference or preferred ordinary shares of £1 with deferred shares of 1s. or 2s. There is never any security behind the preference shares of a new industrial or trading company except the ability of the company to earn profits. Why, then, are preference shares issued at all in such cases unless it be to beguile the unwary investor into a false sense of security? Again the usual speculative issue would have given an estimate of profits over the next three years, with an elaborate programme of sales, to afford additional bait. We stress these points because it is only by reiteration that the Press can hope to improve the tone of public issues and the financial sense of the investor. We commend the Ford prospectus also to the directors of iron and steel companies. Mr. Ford has not saddled himself with heavy prior charges. He has not started with his fixed and floating assets heavily mortgaged to funded creditors. Has not the issue of debentures by our heavy manufacturing industries been overdone? After all, what is the real security even in a debenture giving the right of foreclosure on the company's assets if the assets have lost their profit-earning power? The sale of unwanted bricks, mortar, and machinery is not an attractive last resort. Before some of our iron and steel companies can be "rationalized," they may have to get back to the clean sheet of a preferred ordinary and ordinary share capitalization.

Behind the alarmist headlines in the Press of the "panic" in Wall Street and the "millions of paper dollar losses," it will be found that the New York slump was more or less confined to the extremely speculative stocks whose reaction was long overdue. On December 6th, it was reported that brokers' loans had increased by \$105,000,000 to the new high record of \$5,394,000,000, which compares with \$3,562,000,000 a year ago. Call money was advanced to 12 per cent.—the highest rate since July 1st, 1920—and the fall in the prices of the stocks which have lately been sky-rocketing was the sharpest ever witnessed, it is said, on one day on the New York Stock

Exchange. The following table shows the collapse and subsequent recovery in some of the stocks:—

	Dec. 1st.	Dec. 8th.	Dec. 12th.
Canadian Pacific ... ..	243	220	228
Chrysler ... ..	128½	114½	123½
Electric Bond ... ..	169½	142½	151½
Gulf Oil ... ..	151½	143½	144½
International Harvester ...	372	306	336
Victor Talking ... ..	138½	114	124½
Radio Corporation ... ..	376	296	320
Montgomery Ward ... ..	420	337	128

A New York house has compiled an index of brokers' loans and an index of the prices of 124 stocks selected from seven industries in which the market is actively interested. These indices were plotted and the chart showed that whenever the brokers' loan index crossed and rose above the security price index, it was on the eve of a break in the market. Presumably, when the index of the volume of loans rose, it indicated that stocks were passing from strong hands into those relying to a greater degree on loans to finance their purchases. The point is that at the end of September the loan index line crossed the security price index line, and has remained above it ever since. That is why most people believe that New York is trading on the edge of a precipice. It is too early to say whether a readjustment has yet been effected, but no holder of sound American stocks need be greatly alarmed, even if the shake-out is renewed.

The coming issue of a £4,000,000 Greek Government 6 per cent. Public Works Sterling Loan of 1928 calls attention to the good security enjoyed by Greek loans. This loan is being issued to provide funds for three contracts for public works (including roads) entered into by the Greek Government, and it is secured by a first charge on the unpledged surplus revenues already assigned to or administered by the International Financial Commission. These surplus revenues are paid to the Bank of Greece which, under a mandate from the Greek Government, retains the amounts necessary for the service of the loan. The prospectus states that the surplus available for the service of the bonds in 1928 should be £5,083,553. The figures on which the estimate is based are as follows:—

	1927.	1928 (est.).
Gross receipts from assigned revenues ...	Dr. 3,891,669,535	Dr. 3,943,291,256
Charges and expenses of Société de Régie ...	81,938,199	91,645,597
	3,809,731,336	3,851,645,659

The service of the loans ranking in priority to this Public Works Loan requires Dr.1,616,269,480, leaving Dr.2,235,376,179, equivalent, at 375 Dr., to £5,961,003. Deducting certain contingent charges of £877,450, there is a balance of £5,083,553, sufficient to cover the service (£263,720) of the Public Works Loan nearly twenty times. *A fortiori*, the security behind the old Greek loans, the 7 per cent. Refugee Loan and 6 per cent. Stabilization loan, must be excellent. For example, after meeting the service of the 7 per cent. Refugee Loan in 1927, the available surplus amounted to £6,619,480, and the service of the 6 per cent. Stabilization Loan only required £684,653.

The only trouble with Greek loans is that the New York bond market acts as a drag upon prices in the London Stock Exchange. Here are the prices and yields obtainable for Greek 7 per cent. and 6 per cent. Stabilization Loans in London and New York:—

	London.	Yield.	New York.	Yield.
Greek 7% ... ..	102	£6 18 6	98½	£7 1 8
Greek 6% ... ..	92½	£6 12 6	86½	£6 18 9

NOTE.—London prices include interest accrued: New York prices do not. Allowance is made for this fact in the yield.

The new Greek 6 per cent. Public Works loan is issued at 89, to yield £6 14s. 10d. per cent. flat, or £6 16s. per cent. with redemption by December 1st, 1968. The feature of this loan is that repayment is effected by half-yearly drawings at par, beginning on December 1st, 1929.



